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Christianity and history

CHRISTIANITY AND HISTORY

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CHRISTIANITY AND HISTORY

BY THE REV.
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BY THE SAME AUTHOR

THE PERMANENT ELEMENT IN CHRISTIANITY
PERSONALITY AND REVELATION
THE GROUNDS OF CHRISTIAN BELIEF
CAN WE DISPENSE WITH CHRISTIANITY?

PREFACE

THIS little book is devoted to an exposition, in the light of contemporary knowledge, of the place and significance of history for religion in general and for Christianity in particular. I believe, and I am seeking to vindicate the belief, that the root-cause of the undervaluing of the Christian religion lies in a lack of appreciation of the meaning and value of the historical element in that religion. Equally, I am sure, it is quite impossible to give an effective vindication of the 'absolute validity' of Christianity, a presentation and justification of its claim to finality and universality, apart from all that is involved in the title of this book, *Christianity and History*. I have, therefore, put my hand to a task which deals with the ultimate issue for Christian Thought—an issue which also concerns all those who believe that "this gospel must be preached throughout all the world." If we regard Christianity as the leaven which should leaven the thought and will and hope of all mankind, the question before us is just the issue which is raised in these pages.

The importance of the issue is stressed on account of current tendencies to include Christianity, on equal terms, within a synthesis of ideas drawn from all quarters. My aim is to establish and expound the universal validity of Christianity, its validity 'for all' as distinct from that validity 'for us' (i.e. for Christians

alone) which is allowed by, for example, Troeltsch. This issue is central in the writings of some recent thinkers such as Troeltsch, Schweitzer, and Von Hügel, and I am in certain respects greatly indebted to these writers regarding discussion of this question. I do not think the Christian mind can rest content with assigning a merely relative validity to the Christian religion and, positively, I hold that Christianity can be shown, in virtue of its data in history and in experience, to be 'the final religion.' The point of view adopted and expounded is my own, as is also the method of the argument. It is affiliated with conclusions which I have reached in my earlier writings, but I have here stated the argument point by point with reference to the topic in hand.

There are some words in the Preface of Von Hügel's *Essays and Addresses on the Philosophy of Religion* which I sincerely hope may, in due measure and in my own distinct connections of thought, apply to what I have sought to do. "The point on which we require more than either Augustine or Aquinas gave or could give mankind is especially History—the historic sense. As to this point, I trust that not a line printed within these covers but is steeped in this sense of Conditions, Growth, Contingencies. Yet these same writings will reveal a deep apprehension of the Abiding, the Unconditioned, the Absolute—of our need and of our certitude of these: and especially of Christianity as the original awakener of the deeper historic sense, and of our reaching the Super-historic within it. Nothing indeed is more striking than the perennial affinity between Christianity and History. . . . Certainly the religion of the Incarna-

tion will be able consistently to despise Happenings, however lowly, and the study of Happenings, however minute, only if and when it does not sufficiently realise its own abiding implications and requirements, its rootedness in the Childhood at Nazareth and in the Cross on Calvary."

A word as to the method of argument in this book (not to anticipate conclusions, but as a guide to the reader)—I endeavour, first of all, to trace what are the ultimate issues for Thought as these rise for the modern mind. I contend that certain issues which clamour for solution are left on our hands unless we take into account " what comes to us out of History." I justify and attempt to value what does so come to us out of History. This enquiry prepares the way for my presentation of Christianity as the absolutely valid religion because it solves the universal problem of religion in its personal and social aspects. The capacity of Christianity to solve, on account of its historic basis and distinctive genius, the essential problem of religion is, at one and the same time, the justification, on a religious base, of its claim to ' finality ' and the justification of its decisive significance for constructive thought. The whole constitutes a scientific apologetic by means of a constructive presentation of the capacity of Christianity to solve our deepest questions for practice and for theory.

Among recent books to which I am indebted, either for challenge to further enquiry or for confirmation of my outlook, I ought to mention—R. W. Hobson's *The Domain of Natural Science*; J. A. Thomson's *The System of Animate Nature*; Von Hügel's *Essays and Addresses* and *Mystical Element*; Wm. Mac-

Dougall's *Outline of Psychology* and *Body and Mind*; A. E. Taylor's article, "Theism," in Hastings' *E.R.E.*, vol. 12; Troeltsch's *Christian Thought*; and Schweitzer's *Christianity and the Religions of the World*. The rest of my acknowledgments I have, I believe, made in due place.

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CHRISTIANITY AND HISTORY

CHAPTER I

THE MODERN MIND

We are out to enquire, at the outset, what are the main features of the modern mind: *these features we shall discover from the writings of the chief contemporary men of science and of philosophy.* There is no possibility of discovering these features otherwhere than in such writings. To neglect to give them due consideration would only be to show that after all we do not want to know what is the modern mind, but wish to make the light which is within us darkness.

The men of science will give us the surface indications of the real currents beneath; the men of philosophy will show us the real main current itself, they will give us the deep-sea soundings. To vary the metaphor—the scientific workers will play for us the several instrumental parts; but philosophy will give us the complete harmony, the whole orchestral result. These 'parts' and that 'whole' will give us the contemporary result and these are what the modern-minded thinker will wish to hear. Such considerations will give point to our description of the genuine contemporary mind as the verified and systematic knowledge characteristic of the twentieth century and clearly disclosed in the works of the greater thinkers.

It will hardly create misgiving if we say at once that the modern mind is a real unification (provisional and partial it may be, but, so far as well founded, a true unification) of the results of many streams of enquiry and synthesis. That mind is most of all revealed in the work which is most definitely philosophical work. Careful departmental work lies at the foundation of mind's comprehensive insights, but *mind itself gains its fulfilment and self-expression* in a total view wherein the essence and meaning of all the component parts of what is, after all, one insight are both concentrated and retained.

Having come to the conclusion that we must look for indications of the contemporary mind in contemporary science and, above all, in the philosophy of the day, let us see if we can discover one main current in these departments of knowledge. Earlier epochs have often been characterised by distinctive tendencies. May it not be so regarding the present age ?

Most certainly there is one distinctive characteristic mark of contemporary, of twentieth-century, knowledge and thought. It may not be very strikingly evident if we stand on the sea-shore, but a very slight elevation, so as to gain a deeper look into the waters, will at once show us the general direction of this *main stream.* If I just state, at once, what the distinctive and characteristic achievement of the twentieth-century mind is, my statement will at once spring to my reader's minds as a great and far-reaching fact and truth.

The twentieth century is distinguished from earlier centuries, and in particular from the nineteenth century, by the steady vindication and fruitful appli-

cation of (1) in science, 'the autonomy of the sciences,' and (2) in philosophy, 'the doctrine of degrees in value and in reality,' a doctrine of which 'Relativity' expresses one aspect, and 'Qualitative differences' expresses another aspect.

This great achievement of modern enquiry and thought not only dominates the intellectual horizon, it also qualifies and determines the scope of reference of such terms as 'substance,' 'evolution,' 'time,' and 'space,' and broadly demands a revision of many theories.

1. The present age has for its characteristic achievement in science the vindication of the 'autonomy' of the distinct and several sciences.

F. A. Lange trenchantly observes that "to think clearly about materialism is to refute it." The twentieth century has been thinking clearly about materialism and has proved the truth of the dictum.

"During the greater half of last century the acknowledged working hypotheses of nearly all biologists and psychologists were of a mechanical order." [1] The generalisation which was held to be sufficient to account for all phenomena in biology and in psychology, as well as in chemistry, was evolution, given a materialistic rendering. During the latter half of the nineteenth century some scientific men were not satisfied with the reduction of all processes to two—a physical and a psychical—and their endeavour was to resolve every physical process into a mechanical process. Few of these were men of eminence, and increasing investigation has relegated their teaching, especially in so far as the psychical manifestation itself in the

[1] A. S. Pringle-Pattison, *The Idea of God*, p. 71.

highest experience of mind, to the realm of oblivion. Haeckel and Loeb are the only two scientists of note who stand for a thoroughgoing materialism.[1] It may safely be said, however, that the day of both is passed. Their places have been taken by scientists with wider outlook and more comprehensive minds.[2]

Abundant indication of the changed outlook in science will be gained if we turn to the characteristic utterances of the scientific enquiries of the present day and generation. As investigation has progressed and scientific men have found time to reflect upon their own methods and principles, the knowledge gained has gone far to lift the limitation of materialism off their shoulders. This release has come about from two influences—the first, a direct result of observation and experiment, the second the result of criticism of criteria and categories. The first influence is, in the usual restricted sense of the term, a directly scientific influence. The second shows how much more easy it is to profess indifference to philosophy than to escape from its sway.

The change has been brought about by the new insights gained mainly in biology, and it has been finally established by more precise delimitation of the scope of reference of the several distinct scientific concepts.

The dethronement of the mechanistic hypothesis has proceeded apace since the production of Ostwald's *Naturphilosophie* in 1907. His conception of energy

[1] E. Haeckel, *The Riddle of the Universe* and *The Wonders of Life*. J. Loeb, *The Mechanistic Conception of Life*.

[2] W. Tudor Jones, *The Spiritual Ascent of Man*, p. 26. (Lond. Univ. Press.)

is different from that which ruled the earlier mechanical physics. Both in organic and in inorganic phenomena he discovers factors which pure materialism cannot explain, and his results are handed on to others who must take up the task of interpretation where he leaves off. Sir Edward A. Schafer [1] in 1912 also recognises a dualism—in his case between organic life and the life of consciousness. The work of discrimination regarding the scope of categories finds, however, full expression in the works of Hans Driesch.[2] He brings under survey the facts of morphogenesis—the development of the embryo and the recuperation of lost parts. He claims that, as a direct result of observation and experiment, a theory of life must be framed which transcends the mechanical theory. The conclusions reached on such lines, supported by those special studies of the relations between body and mind which have been undertaken by Dr. W. MacDougall [3] and Dr. J. S. Haldane [4] and others, make the older materialistic concepts quite untenable.

Now, it is quite impossible to keep our knowledge in separate water-tight compartments. These results, in chemistry, in biology, in psychology, must be seen confederate. The issue turns upon the question whether *all* the phenomena of the various departments of science can be explained by mechanical laws. If they cannot be so explained we must still seek

[1] *Life : Its Nature, Origin and Maintenance.*

[2] *The Philosophy of the Organism* and the *Problem of Individuality.*

[3] *Body and Mind*, 1911.

[4] J. S. Haldane, *Mechanism, Life and Personality*, 1913 ; *The New Physiology*, 1919. J. A. Thomson, *The System of Animate Nature*, 1920. Viscount Haldane, *The Philosophy of Humanism*, 1922.

a unifying conception which can do justice to the significance of them all *in their separateness and in their mutual connections.* The great positive value of the idea of evolution (even in its materialistic setting) is its recognition of the claims of unification of concepts. The new insights require a correlation which will do justice to each and all. They point out the necessity for a philosophy of the sciences.

It is not a question whether physical processes may not find a real, though restricted, application in the study of biology and psychology. The question is whether, by the use of such concepts and processes, we gain anything like a complete account of the manifestation of life. "Scientific unification takes place in so far as diverse classes of phenomena come to be recognised as deducible from a single, relatively simple, generalisation covering the correlation of certain variables—provided that in each particular case the actual natures or values of the variables be known. And unification fails of attainment in so far as two or more kinds of phenomena appear, in the light of existing knowledge, as undeducible from any single, already verified, law, even when the actual values of the variables referred to by any such law are precisely ascertained from the phenomena in question. When two or more comparatively specific laws are, in this latter sense, incapable of being deduced from any common, more general, law—in other words, are not thus far unified, we may speak of those laws as being discontinuous with one another."[1] When such discontinuity is recognised, as, e.g., in the case of psychology compared with biology, there must be,

[1] A. O. Lovejoy, *The Unity of Science*, 1, 17.

under the impulse towards a unification of knowledge, a correlation of concepts on a graded scale instead of a single generalisation. Undue simplification would simply mean uncritical neglect of the qualitative differences disclosed in the phenomena.

That the concepts required for interpretation of vital phenomena are, in point of fact, discontinuous with the chemical and physical concepts is clearly evident as the result of recent research. The mechanistic hypothesis is a useful theory as far as it goes, but it requires to be supplemented by the recently acquired criteria of 'livingness' and of 'behaviourism.' Nor must we be surprised if our recognition of the limitations of the scientific outlook at the end of the nineteenth century has to be more far-reaching than is often allowed. "It sounds incredible, but nevertheless it is true, that science up to the close of the nineteenth century had no suspicion even of the existence of the original sources of natural energy. The vista which has been opened up by these new discoveries admittedly is without parallel in the whole history of science."[1]

The new perspective gained by means of these additions to our knowledge has recently been reinforced by the empirical justification (brought about by the confirmation of Einstein's doctrine of physical relativity in 1919)[2] of the far-reaching principle of Rela-

[1] Fredk. Soddy, *Harper's Magazine*, December 1909. The reference is to change in position of the parts constituting the atom, as in radium.

[2] "Einstein had succeeded in making a precise estimate of what ought to appear to be the deflection of the rays coming from certain fixed stars, influenced by the gravitational attraction of the sun on the passing rays. The idea of such a deflection was

tivity—that 'Copernican change.' New facts—calling for new interpretations, have been brought to light which have profoundly modified the earlier applications both of 'evolution' and of 'continuity.'

The older ideal, the ambition of finding one generalisation which would suffice to explain all phenomena, has been forced to give way before the new ideal of a correlation of the distinct branches of science. The attempted reduction of psychology to physiology and of physiology to chemistry has been found to be unworkable. The meaning of continuity becomes merged into that of a scale of concepts conjoined with 'system.' *Science has on its hands its own problem of restatement and the grammar of it is co-ordination*—'degrees' in value and in meaning and a comprehensive 'synthesis,' conserving all values and gaining interpretation through the highest categories. Once on this road, however, there is no halting-place before you come to philosophy properly so

familiar, and its lines have been calculated by others on the footing that space and the paths of light in it were all conditions of the same character. The actual deflection could only be observed during an eclipse, and on the 29th of May, 1919, such an eclipse was to take place. Einstein predicted that, as a result of relativity, the actual deflection would, if observed, prove to be by a definite amount greater than it could be if the Newtonian theory of absolute space were true. The English Astronomer Royal took up this challenge in 1917, when, the war notwithstanding, the details of Einstein's calculations had reached this country. In 1919 two English expeditions were sent out to West Africa and Brazil respectively. Successful observations were made. In November the Astronomer Royal announced the results to the Royal Society. Einstein's calculation had proved to be substantially the true one, and something like a revolution in a great department of scientific thought was the result."—Viscount Haldane, *The Reign of Relativity*, 2nd edn., p. 52.

called,[1] to ' a science of sciences,' to inclusive ' meaning ' to ' the whole.' If we are to-day being driven to philosophy, even against our will, it is science which is driving us there. Logic will see to it that we complete the journey. When we appeal to this Cæsar we must go to him and go all the way with him, and his own way too. The final meanings of each departmental science become constructs for unified knowledge and ' the spirit of totality ' takes no refusals. The initial lesson of the changed onlook in science may be summed up in Dr. Pringle-Pattison's words: " The concentrated biological research of the last fifty years, while it has immensely extended our knowledge of the mechanics and the chemistry of organic processes, has strikingly failed to substantiate the mechanistic hypothesis from which most of the researchers started. Instead of coming nearer, the reduction of biological processes to terms of mechanism appears to recede, as knowledge deepens and becomes more intimate."[2] This is but the initial lesson, but it sets our feet upon a pathway which rises through psychology, ethics, and philosophy to the acknowledgment of God and of man's spiritual value, destiny, and ascent.

The still wider emancipation introduced by a fair and impartial recognition of the scope and limitations of ' natural ' science has many aspects and the matter will occupy our attention at a later stage of our enquiry. Perhaps it will accompany us all the way we shall be bound to take, for it may prove that not even within science lies all the pathway to knowledge of ' reality ' and of ' truth.'

[1] The New Realism is but ' a half-way house.'

[2] *The Idea of God*, p. 71.

"No body of scientific doctrine ever succeeds in describing in terms of laws of succession more than some limited set of stages of a natural process: the whole process—if, indeed, it can be regarded as a whole—must for ever be beyond the reach of scientific grasp. The earliest stages to which science has succeeded in tracing back any part of a sequence of phenomena itself constitutes a new problem for science, and that without end. There is always an earlier stage, and to an earliest we can never attain. The questions of origins concern the theologian, the metaphysician, perhaps the poet." [1]

The laws deduced from observation of restricted systems of phenomena cannot be uncritically transferred beyond the systems in which they are actually found to operate. Scientific procedure contains a limitation which is involved in its very nature. In order to classify the materials with which it deals it must abstract from the whole of the phenomena. It must divide and separate in order to conquer. It may, more or less, describe certain aspects of the total appearance, but it never quite completely reaches or describes the concrete instance in all its relations and significance. The partial views which are all that it can attain are not by themselves sufficient. Even when pieced together the result is not much more than patchwork. The unique individual in each case, from the atom to the universe, escapes analysis and description. The impossibility of gaining a complete definition of the individual case by means of class concepts arises partly from the relativity of the tests and measurements which must be employed. "Ob-

[1] Schuster and Shipley, *Britain's Heritage of Science*, p. 276.

servers within a system of reference, in uniform movement of translation relativity to other systems, have no absolute standard by which they can determine their movements. There is no absolute ether, no absolute space, and no absolute time by reference to which we can determine our movements." [1]

While the subject-matter observed still continues to evolve and the standards of reference may easily be variables, the dogmas of science can never be more than approximately correct. The far-reaching effect of the principle of relativity can only be compared with the revolution due to the introduction of Copernican astronomy. Conjoined with the wider horizons disclosed by the results of modern enquiry in biology and in psychology, this principle has led to a definite retreat on the part of scientific enquirers who are also thinkers, from the earlier claim to world-interpretation. The retreat has been effected openly and with perfect frankness. There is now growing appreciation of the real scope of philosophy and, on the part of philosophy, an increasing tendency to incorporate within its synthesis the general results of scientific investigation.

Properly understood, and with their frontiers rightly delineated, there is no hostility between science and philosophy. Even the assumed hostility between the scientific mood and the emotional mood may be greatly exaggerated. "There are great vistas to which science alone can lead, and they make for elevation of mind. In this and in other ways science may be epigrammatically called 'one of the humani-

[1] H. Wildon Carr, *The New Idealist Movement in Philosophy*, 1918, p. 21.

ties,' "[1] There is no release from the demand for a synoptic view, a unification of all our knowledge, a full view both of the 'parts' and of the 'whole.' We must form some coherent picture of the results of scientific enquiry in their all-togetherness. So doing we hand on the scientific results to philosophy, 'integration' and synthesis. No better statement of the relations between science and philosophy can be made than that given by Professor A. E. Taylor[2]: "The work of the philosophy of nature and of mind only begins where that of the experimental sciences leaves off. Its data are not particular facts, as directly amassed by experiment and observation, but the hypothesis used by the experimental science for the co-ordination and description of these facts. And it examines these hypotheses, not with the object of modifying their structure so as to include new facts, or to include the old facts in a simpler form, but purely for the purpose of estimating their value as an account of ultimately real existence. Whether hypotheses are adequate as implements for the calculation of natural processes, is a question which philosophy, when it understands its place, leaves entirely to the special sciences. Whether they can claim to be more than useful formulæ for calculation, i.e. whether they give us knowledge of ultimate Reality, is a problem which can only be dealt with by the science which systematically analyses the meaning of Reality, i.e. by Metaphysics. We may perhaps follow the usage of some recent writers in marking this difference of objects by a difference in terminology

[1] J. A. Thomson, Art. Science, Hastings' *E.R.E.*, vol. ii, p. 258.
[2] A. E. Taylor, *Elements of Metaphysics*, p. 192.

and say that the goal of experimental science is the description of facts, the goal of metaphysics their interpretation. The difference of aim is, however, not ultimate. Description of facts, when once we cease to be content with such description as will subserve the purpose of calculation and call for the description of the fact as it really is, of itself becomes metaphysical interpretation."

We have made our enquiry into the dominating achievements of the modern mind in the scientific realm. Our study has revealed to us the departure of the modern mind from the idea that there is one mechanical or mathematical generalisation, covering the meaning of all phenomena. It has shown to us an ascending set of domains revealing a scale of values, and in the higher domains disclosing features which warrant J. S. Haldane in voicing the conviction that " this world, and all that is in it is a spiritual world." We have seen also that for interpretation of the ultimate meanings of both nature and mind we must pass on into the sphere of philosophy. In point of fact, we have already, even at the strictly empirical level, been bound to employ philosophical concepts, for we have found it impossible to avoid the use of the idea of ' degrees ' in values and in meaning and the use of a scale of qualitative difference.

2. The characteristic achievement of the present age in philosophy is (as we have seen it to be in science) the vindication and application of the principles of ' degrees ' in value and in reality. Relativity presents one aspect of this principle, but its positive meaning is summarised in the statement that " reality presents itself at different levels."

The 'autonomy of the sciences' is the prelude, on the scientific level, to "the doctrine of degrees in value and in reality" on the philosophical level. These two ideas—really one idea, the recognition of qualitative distinctions—are the characteristic marks of modern thought. Of course their significance is somewhat variously interpreted: though even in interpretation there are converging lines of substantial agreement. Even the new realists make use of these general concepts, although inconsistently.

The principle of 'degrees,' in its aspect of relativity, is one on which the metaphysicians and the men of science meet and are at one. "Already the mathematicians are over the border line and are at work in what used to be considered the domain of the metaphysician. Perhaps it will turn out that the title-deed of the latter is not wholly inoperative, but he seems, at present at least, disposed to look upon his brother, the mathematician, not as a trespasser but rather as a long-expected and welcome guest." [1]

The principle of relativity is a general philosophical principle, not altogether new in philosophy, but which has received of recent years striking empirical justification and illustration. Professor H. Wildon Carr, in his two volumes, *The General Principle of Relativity* and *A Theory of Monads*, finds a genuine anticipation of the conception of relativity in the monadism of Leibnitz. He also stresses the range of influence of the principle itself, and in his general presentation of the case is broadly in agreement with Haldane's claim regarding the metaphysical basis of the idea. "The very advance of science, by its own method,

[1] Viscount Haldane's *The Reign of Relativity*, p. 53.

and on its chosen conditions, has brought it face to face with the philosophical problem it set out by ignoring. A revolution once started has a way of gathering momentum and goes on completing itself. And to-day science, from its old attitude of regarding knowledge as not anything, is fast coming to regard it as everything." Dr. Wildon Carr, after recounting the effect of the verification of Einstein's calculation of the curvature of light through the observations of May 29, 1919—a verification which he speaks of as the "fall of the Bastille" of the older mechanistic theories—writes: "But, though the revolution has been sudden, the scientific world was ripe for it. For many years and in many directions the old bedrock materialism, on which science had hitherto builded, was seen to be cracking and crumbling. Along several lines the sciences had been steadily converging on the necessity of a complete revision of their fundamental principle." [1]

Viscount Haldane also, in his *Reign of Relativity* and with more detailed application in *The Philosophy of Humanism*, gives a far wider setting for Relativity than that afforded by either geometry or physics, and uses the principle as a metaphysical one, an aspect of the real, of which the mathematical applications, including Einstein's practical verification, are just a confirmation.

The justification of relativity begins at a level lower than that of mathematical astronomy. It forces itself upon the mind as soon as the transition is made from chemistry to biology. It culminates in the idea that nature is not finally self-contained. Its

[1] H. Wildon Carr, *A Theory of Monads*, p. 3.

complete lesson is that the object is not really divorcible from the subject, for both fall within knowledge and are for knowledge. " Beyond knowledge—knowledge which is the subject itself in its essential aspect—we cannot get."

The principle of relativity can be tested by observation. On that account it well illustrates both the systematic unity of reality and also the contemporary *rapprochement* between empirical science and constructive thought. For what is thus tested and vindicated is a metaphysical truth—it must be so unless you abandon the implications of the Einstein observations. It supports the philosophical contention that truth is a relation between subject and object within the whole of knowledge and which falls within the experience of the self. This is not solipsism, but the idea that the universe in which the self is placed is altogether spiritual, compact of spirit through and through. " Einstein's doctrine of the relativity of our physical knowledge to the observing mind may be said to be a scientific and exact illustration of the wider principle which affirms that in all knowledge the object is determined, in its significance as real, by the conceptions which mind brings to bear in interpreting and giving it meaning." [1]

The principle of ' relativity ' rests upon and involves the principle of ' degrees.' The conceptions ' higher and lower,' ' partial ' and ' adequate '—such contrasts as involve qualitative difference, are inevitable and are demanded for interpretation. The standpoints are relative to their worth and inclusiveness, but at all the levels it is reality which appears. That there are

[1] Viscount Haldane, *The Philosophy of Humanism*, p. 47.

these different levels "in which both our knowledge and the reality it seeks" have different forms is the one lesson which the principle of the relativity of knowledge teaches. Care must be exercised that we do not confuse these distinctions of level. Concepts applicable at one level may have no significance at another and higher level. We must criticise our categories and get a scale of concepts graduated according to value, according to the degree of reality disclosed at each level. The temptation to shield the use of any method which may avail for certain restricted fields must be avoided. We have to be made aware that explanation in terms of a lower degree, or level of manifestation, of reality will not suffice for a higher level and, above all, will not suffice for a total comprehensive synthesis. Over and above, e.g., the biological realm there may be a further and totally different system of reference.

A summary statement of the bearing of the principle of relativity upon scientific knowledge is firstly this—it is first of all a fact (a fact in the strictly scientific sense of the word) that the Newtonian conceptions of space and time are not workable. "It corrects," as Dr. Wildon Carr says, "a false notion and replaces it by a true one." Secondly, it shows that we must seek our solution of the problem both of reality and appearance within Mind; they all are for knowledge and the distinctions which fall within knowledge are those which Mind makes for itself. The net result is the one which we adumbrated in our outline of the achievement of the modern mind in science—there must be (strictly under the pressure of knowledge in contemporary light) an abandonment of the material-

istic theories. " It is no longer true, if it once seemed to be true, that the mathematical, physical and natural sciences depend on the realistic hypothesis. The assumption of material existence as a presupposition of the activity of mind in knowing and in acting, even as a purely methodological postulate, is unworkable in science. This is the real meaning of the new Copernican revolution in science, which is named the principle of relativity." [1]

The insights gained through recent scientific enquiry, set in the wider philosophical context, determine the form of the constructive task of contemporary thought. *This is philosophy's problem of restatement*—a criticism of categories and their arrangement on a scale of qualitative difference. In attempting this task the idea of *system* must be kept to the fore, and now that explanation by reduction is seen to be impossible, we may hope for a more comprehensive attainment. That the interpretation is one which will do justice to all the component parts is what we may hope for. Greatness both in thought and in life consists in having large outlooks, but they must be really comprehensive and they must really explain. Even that which is least must find its place and add its own contribution within the totality of *meaning*. It is with the discernment of truth and reality that we are dealing when we appreciate degrees in value and in meaning. It is important that this should be kept in mind. By means of the principle of relativity and degrees we do not get rid of the essentially logical claim of wholeness, system and comprehensiveness. Rather we gain a means whereby by use of a scale of

[1] H. Wildon Carr, op. cit., pp. 8 f.

concepts we may see that degree of importance is the same thing as degree of manifestation of reality. Thus we are led to seek a systematic and total view, inclusive of all meanings, proportionate and not excluding the significance of the things that are least. Genuine philosophy always concerns itself with the 'truth-claim.' In Dr. Wildon Carr's words, "It corrects a false notion and replaces it by a true one." With just that emphasis upon the meaning of a genuine 'synthesis' we approach our further quest and our constructive task. Test the matter how or where you will, the characteristic achievement of contemporary thought, based on science and on the demands of comprehensive interpretation, is the recognition of the 'autonomy of the sciences'—and emancipation owing to the steady enforcement of the principle of 'degrees' in value. Philosophy's main task remains what it always has been and always must be—'the impulse towards totality.' But for the modern mind this effort towards inclusive interpretation is guided by the principle of 'degrees,' or 'scale,' and *that is the most important general result of enquiry in the present age.*

CHAPTER II

THE MODERN SYNTHESIS

We have seen something of the value and interest of the different domains and systems of knowledge. We know also that the human soul can never be content with mere fragments either of existence or of information. We must see the various phases in relation to one another, and we must see them steadily and whole.

For our particular and restricted piece of work in the world it is necessary that our attention, and a great portion of our interest, should be concentrated upon our limited field. But if we are wise we shall know that we shall do our allotted task all the better if we, at least in brief seasons of leisure, know that our restricted interests are not the sum and substance of all that may be experienced and known. We shall attend better to the demands of our own sphere if we call to mind that we also belong to the great world, and are citizens of no mean city. Interest in 'the parts' may be, often is, the road to special competence, but interest in 'the whole' must always be the mark of education and of our genuine humanism. Restricted interests often mean limited sympathies, and have a way of reacting unfavourably upon the life and thought of the individual.

The same considerations bear upon the relations existing between any particular science and philosophy. The interest in a science is an interest in one or more

of 'the parts.' The interest of philosophy is in 'the whole,' the sum of the parts and their genuine unification.

Probably no recent writer has given more effective statement of the demands of wholeness and inclusiveness of interest and of thought than Dr. Bernard Bosanquet in his Gifford volume, *Individuality and Value*. There must be a passing from the restricted interest to that which is entire, "A *Pilgrim's Progress* is inevitable, both in life and in thought." "For Plato, emphatically and primarily, the world is but one; and of this one world, the human soul, when most self-centred and self-satisfied, is almost wholly disinherited." The life-problem has its counterpart in the quest, for Dr. Bosanquet's insistence upon the necessity for system and wholeness of interpretation is so relevant to our present enquiry that I will venture to dwell upon the main feature of his second lecture, in which he deals with the 'concrete universal.' Therein it is his contention that "thought has always the nature of a system of connected members, and is an effort to take that form which we may call a 'world.' This is the only sort of thing which can satisfy the logical law that contradiction is a mark of unreality, or—the same law—that the truth or the real is 'the whole.'"

It is plain that Dr. Bosanquet, in thus using the illustration or image of 'a world,' sets no store by empty generalisations which fail to do justice to the concrete instance in all its uniqueness and individual worth. I do not think he has always done justice to his own insight in his final conclusions, but at least his original intentions have been good. The universe

to which logic tends is something wherein all meanings are retained within the great meaning. Comprehensiveness, i.e. non-elimination of the significance of detail, is necessary for a genuine whole of truth. "In the structure of a world every detail gains incalculably in intensity and in meaning." "A second of time may be apprehended as a part of a minute, or of a musical phrase, or of an act of forbearance, and its meaning varies accordingly. . . . Logical completeness or universality is not a deadening but a vitalising quality, and thought is not a principle of reproducing reality with omissions, but of organising worlds and investing their detail with fresh significance."[1]

This pressure towards togetherness of thought comes from the actual urge of logic. We cannot, so long as reason forces us along, rest in any conceptions which fail of complete range and adequacy. Only as we pass from partial meanings to the sum of them, and to the total view which unifies their meaning, are we free from an inner unrest and a sense of logical shortcoming. We are driven to seek a more embracing view and a larger synthesis. Such a total view takes account of the lower factors in the complex of our concepts, but it recognises that the higher is really higher, more important, really more comprehensive. A sense of proportion, expressing itself in a scale of concepts conveying qualitative differences, must guide us in the ascent to completeness of outlook. Totality, proportion, and comprehensiveness, these are the keys to understanding and the impelling motives of logic. Use of them will save us from explanations which do not explain: they will keep us away from that

[1] B. Bosanquet, *Individuality and Value*, pp. 24, 59, 299 et passim.

materialistic 'explanation by reduction' which is a mere abandonment of our problem: they will keep us away from that 'single self-consciousness' or empty Absolute which is a mere denial of the significance of finite individuality.

If we have followed the teaching of the modern achievements in science and in philosophy, we have appreciated the fact that nature shows to us a scale of qualitative differences in the field of scientific research. The scientific idea of continuity must be so far modified as to make room for these different levels in value and in the scale of existence. If we are to describe correctly, still more if we are to explain adequately matters of knowledge, a range of concepts must be employed. Yet we must hold all together and seek the broad conception which can give us that total view which logic impels us to seek.

The reality which confronts us, at a lower level in the inanimate realm, at a higher level in the realm of animate nature, at a still higher level in human personality and in our moral and religious life, is one reality and one manifestation of truth. The mind's refusal of ultimate dualism is unqualified. Yet we must seek a conception which allows for diversity, for the rich variety and fulness of existence, as well as for the unity of system and the whole. This principle of unity, which subsists within and through diversity, we shall find in the idea of Spirit. And the idea which will do justice to the place of the finite self we shall find in the idea of God. Through that conception we shall rise to a totality which neither disintegrates the cosmos through a pluralism which abandons logic's problem nor denies the finite individual through

an absolutism which is merely the empty form of totality. Reality is disclosed in the system of appearances, and most of all in the personal life of morality and religion, wherein 'spirit with Spirit' may meet. *We understand most clearly and most comprehensively at the heights,* though the lower levels have their rights and interests and contribute their own information also: "What we have to deal with is the continuous manifestation of a single Power whose full nature cannot be identified with the initial stage of the evolutionary process, but can only be learned from the course of the process as a whole, and *most fully from its final stages.*" [1]

When we have recognised that mechanism cannot account for nature, and still less for human personality, such a recognition, gained at the intellectual level, itself constitutes a moral demand. There is a kind of 'ought' even at the stage when we are concerned with knowledge alone. We 'ought' to see things as they are, and it becomes us to acknowledge the truth.

The realm of the 'ought,' however, gains its true valuation when it teaches us that we ought to form the soul after the image of the values and ideals which the moral order imposes. The view which we form of the universe cannot remain a mere intellectual concept. Philosophy is not a game which we play out and finish, leaving the players refreshed, perhaps, or stimulated, but otherwise unchanged. It affects our whole attitude, emotional and active, as well as intellectual.[2]

The moral judgment is essentially a judgment of 'worth.' A quantitative judgment of the individual

[1] A. S. Pringle-Pattison, *The Idea of God*, p. 209.

[2] Sorley, *Moral Values and the Idea of God*, p. 478.

deals with external aspects of organisation and the relation of parts. There is another aspect—and, according to our judgment of its significance, we attach *value,* to the individual. The highest value belongs to persons. Indeed, the use of the term in relation to things is a secondary or merely instrumental use of the term.

We have already seen how qualitative differences emerge at the physical and biological levels. No real appreciation of differences, especially no appreciation of the characteristic differences between 'life' and 'mechanism,' could be gained apart from the use of a scale of values. If the recognition of value does not involve recognition of the reality or 'objectivity' of the differences and contrasts, no science, no classification, above all no grading of concepts, would be possible, for no knowledge could be attained. "The grounds for denying the objectivity of morality are equally grounds for denying the objectivity of knowledge." [1]

The moral values are realised in persons, and their expression through persons discloses, in the moral realm, the objective worth of persons. But the realisation of moral value is never a thing of merely private attainment. The moral value attained discloses response to the over-individual standard. It is an attainment of conformity with the ideal. As its ground it has the objective standard of moral value, it implies the moral order, and points beyond itself to the absolute source of goodness.

The ideal, then, *has its ultimate ground in the reality which is the infinite background* of appearances. There must be a distinction between the higher and lower

[1] Sorley, op. cit., p. 508.

levels of experience. *Our view of the ultimate meanings* of all that experience discloses *must contain this appreciation* of degree of value *as part of insight into the real.* We learn the nature of the system in which we have our being from the necessary scale of importance and significance. In seeking to determine the nature of the universe, moral values will carry us further than those concepts which avail only to describe certain aspects of existence, physical and material. We learn the characteristics of the ultimately Real in the total system of its appearance; but, most of all, in those aspects which, as in the moral values actualised in persons, disclose spirit and will. To form a theory of reality without taking account of the grades of appearance, without recognising the supreme manifestation of reality, given in the moral life, would be to attain a premature, an inadequate synthesis. Materialism is merely the theory of being stopped at less than half-way on the road to knowledge. Its error is that of a specious but mistaken simplicity. One of the problems of philosophy, a problem also for practical life, is, how to account for the readiness wherewith materialism infects both mind and spirit.

The conception of the moral order of the universe is the extension into the spiritual realm, the realm of personality and of the values of goodness, beauty, and truth, of the trustworthiness of the universe. Every scientific experiment rests upon and uses the confidence in the natural order without which no results could be depended upon. "The moral principle has much the same axiomatic position in religion as the physical has in science."[1] The significance of

[1] Sorley, *Moral Values*, p. 179.

the postulate of the reasonableness of the universe—a postulate which is as necessary for scientific enquiry as it is for religious faith—is well expressed by A. Campbell Fraser. After pointing out the practical identity between the confidence in the order of nature which is the condition of the existence of science and that confidence in God which is at the root of morality and religion, he goes on to say: "If cosmic faith is the assurance that the material world will not in the end put to *intellectual* confusion those who rely on the universality of its natural order, this blended moral and religious faith not only guarantees the physical faith itself, but is the absolute assurance that the Supreme Power will not put to permanent *moral* confusion those who strive permanently to realise the ideals of truth and beauty and goodness."[1] This moral and religious postulate, the implied presupposition of moral action, involves the conviction that our moral efforts are not without avail, but that the spirit of the whole is with us in them, and has educed and will vindicate the striving. Such a perception means that morality expresses an essential feature of reality, and 'there shall never be one lost good.'

The recognition of the place of the moral values requires a complete breach with the hedonistic, or at least eudæmonistic, ethics of the nineteenth century. Not only must we interpret to the less-developed in the light of the more-developed notions and values, but we must also introduce the ideas of end and process and of a higher good to be gained by sacrifice. The 'small self' must be overcome in the interests of the wider life.

[1] *The Philosophy of Theism*, vol. i, p. 274.

The principle of 'degrees,' the different 'levels' at which reality appears, prepares the mind for recognition of one supreme and ever-present contrast. Reality appears in diverse modes, but these are dominated by the over-mastering fact of the distinction between the natural order and the moral order. It is safe to say that, upon a recognition of the difference between these two orders and upon discovery of the way in which both may have their full significance expressed in a comprehensive view of the universe, turns our decisions as to the value and destiny of souls and the meaning to be attached to the Idea of God.

The point of the contrast between that order which seems so profoundly indifferent to our moral and spiritual interests and that moral order which makes the demand for the utmost allegiance to the beautiful, the good, and the true, lies in the difficulty thus created for realisation of the highest good. It is distinctly by an *overcoming* of the final impression which nature might make upon us that we make any way towards an effective possession of the life of the spirit. Only when we grasp the fact that this world is not the sphere of our enjoyment, nor of our complete attainment, do we touch the fringes of a solution of the problem of human life confronted by, and easily dominated by, the values appropriate for lower nature and for things. Not as the place of our self-realisation, but as 'the vale of soul-making' must we regard the sphere of our present experience. And, while a world in which virtue is won and maintained through strife can never be the place of our rest, it may well be the place where the soul is being fashioned 'for shape and use.' So reading the lesson

of our every-day experience and also of our most critical thought, we get to the idea of God, and also to freedom and immortality.

No form of naturalism avails to interpret a situation in which, over and above a realm of natural laws, there exists a realm of objective spiritual values realised in finite persons. Naturalism is inadequate because it simply denies the chief factors in the equation. Equally, absolute or pantheistic Monism fails to do justice to the problem. Such theories always either hark back to an undiluted materialism which takes no account of the self or reach on to the undifferentiated One 'beyond good and evil,' which denies the plain indications of the place in being of the finite bearer of moral value. The idea which does justice to the objectivity of moral values, as well as to the causal system of nature, and to the unification of both as provision for the realisation by finite persons of their moral value and attainment, is the idea of God which prevails in ethical monotheism. That idea reaches complete expression when we say that "He is, and is the rewarder of them that seek Him." "In Him we live and move and have our being."

Such an idea of God is necessarily involved in the outlook upon the world and upon the human soul which the lessons of contemporary knowledge force upon us. It is reached by the implications of logical thought dealing with all the various ranges of appearance under pressure of the impulsion towards unification of knowledge governed by comprehensiveness and an inevitable scale of values and of the manifestation of reality. The demands of a genuine system of thought, inclusive of all meanings, are met by the

conception of God which satisfies the moral and religious consciousness. The characteristic achievement of the modern mind, the enforcement of the principle of 'degrees' in value and in reality, when carried up into the realm of the objective values of morality, leads on to the justification of theistic idealism.

In the light of the moral order of the universe we gain the conviction of the essential greatness of man. Man is great, not because he stands above all other creatures in the degree of his awareness of self, but because of the quality and infinite meaning of the values which he may appreciate and express. The ideals which a man may pursue are not matters of merely private preference. They are borne in upon the soul from their eternal and infinite Source. They disclose the action of the infinite within the finite. They open up the possibility of endless advance and give meaning and value to the aspirations of the soul.

It is as a disclosure of reality that we are considering the meaning of the moral ideal. There is in each situation in life a right to be done and a moral value to be attained. Regarding the pursuit of art or knowledge there is a limitation, in individual cases, which does not prevail in the case of moral value. The instruments of production or of learning may, through poverty or through manifold circumstances, not be available, but the possibility of right desire and of right action is present in every instance of call to moral decision. Thus the moral order and its claims lead us to the most universal contact with the superhuman ideal. It has the most distinct features of universality.

There is the touch of infinite appeal and constraint

about the impact of the moral ideal upon the soul. The moral elevation which has been gained has to be held and retained, and the demand is not merely for the retention of the ground which has been won. The ideal sets before the soul nothing less than the quest of the perfect and entire, not the mere conservation of the values which have been realised, but their increase and their final completion. The presence of the infinite within the finite, the call and constraint of the perfect, these are the supreme testimonies of the moral ideal.

Morality cannot be taken as the general expression of the social will. Its essential genius is not grasped until we recognise its right to criticise not only our own desires and actions, but also those expressed in the current opinions and tendencies not only of sections of society, but of the whole social organism itself. Utilitarian ethics fail to present the essential spirit of morality, and so do the ethics of work. There is no complete presentation of the meaning of the moral ideal below that recognition of its source and goal which is given in the religious consciousness.

The primary witness of morality at once calls for a limitation (or clearer definition of the application) of Evolution. Evolution, in its naturalistic presentation, gives the impression that moral action is the result of necessity : it places man in a passive or contemplative attitude towards his environment. This plainly denies the characteristic complications of morality, freedom, responsibility, and power.

The appeal of the moral sense is to hero in the man. A theory of morality which does not stultify its distinctive quality, i.e. a theory which can really *explain*,

can never rest in passive acceptance of the given and actual. "Morality brings with it a reversal of the first appearance of things and is, therefore, metaphysical. Hence, by having recourse to morality, we do not rid ourselves of metaphysics. If we are really in earnest in keeping morality free from all metaphysics, we unavoidably reduce it to a state of lamentable superficiality."[1] Spiritual life, of which life the following of the moral ideal is an integral aspect, is sharply separated from and elevated above the life of natural instinct. The implications of true personal life are deeply rooted in a metaphysical reality, the universal life of the Spirit. Nor is it possible to deny objective validity to the main implications of the personal life in its relation to the moral order. Value is estimated by standards that are final, by criteria which are as objective in their own sphere as those tests of quantity which avail in their appropriate fields of reference.

The governing idea for appreciation of the ultimate bearing of the witness of the moral and religious consciousness is that confidence in the reasonableness of the universe which underlies both science and philosophy. "That which is highest to us is also in and to the universe most real, and there can be no question of its reality being somehow upset." "Our experience is nowhere infected by radical falsehood."[2]

In interpretation of the significance of experience we simply must adopt a scale of values. The scientific order transcends the empirical order, and the philosophical order, which seeks a harmonious interpreta-

[1] R. Eucken, *Main Currents of Modern Thought*, p. 390.
[2] Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, p. 146.

tion of our whole experience, transcends the order of natural science. There is a difference here in scope, in comprehensiveness, and, above all, in degree. The aim is the attainment of a complete system, but in that system nothing must be explained away and everything must be rightly graded. When we are occupied with any subordinate section of experience we may, for the purpose of a certain well-defined control of our material, define our subject-matter as though it stood out of relation to higher phases of existence. That will do no harm, so long as we remember that we are merely abstracting, for the time being, from the full meaning of our subject-matter and especially from the whole of our experience. To leave out the fact of human personality in our final and comprehensive view would be merely to " darken counsel by words without understanding."

We do not understand anything at all until we see it in the light of the whole. We must not take even the different values by themselves. They are parts of our perception of one system in which the spirit of the whole manifests itself at different levels and different relations. A total view which is satisfactory must be inclusive of all meanings, and interests, harmonised and having the unity of system.

Appreciating the lesson of ' degrees,' in value and in reality, we shall be prepared to give to the testimony of the religious consciousness its rightful hearing. On the face of it, its claim to have come into contact with Reality is insistent and profound. Nothing has more the features of infinite right and absolute control than the imperative of morality and of the life of the spirit. For an account of the real intensity and

quality of the religious sentiment we must go to the moral and religious man himself. At the moment when the right has to be done and the truth followed it does not occur to the religious consciousness to doubt the absolute validity of the voice which calls to it. Its own prima-facie evidence is that in the moral and religious experience itself the soul is dealing with Reality in its most certain mode.

All degrees of value merge in this final and absolute sense of worth in the characteristic religious and moral consciousness. Here we are at the very top of the scale. The sense of importance which the self attaches to the dictates of moral right and of spiritual demand corresponds with our critical valuation of the place of the self in being and of the meaning of morality and religion. If any difference of value, such as that which is perceived between 'things' and 'persons,' has any right to be recognised (and we have shown how this difference must, on all scientific grounds, be recognised), then this supreme difference of value, that given in moral and religious experience, must be allowed its place at top of the scale. *To think otherwise would be to abandon the use of the criterion of importance and value*—the very thing which a scientific conscience will not allow us to do. The *truth-claim is here borne in upon us with overwhelming force*, and in no phase of our experience is the objective reality of the judgment of value more immediately in evidence than in the moral and religious consciousness of the presence of the ideal. It is this primary sense of the reality confronted in the inward personal experience of the self which justifies Mr. Bradley's words: "There is nothing more real than comes in

religion. To compare facts such as these with what comes to us in outward existence would be to trifle with the subject." [1]

Taking for our clue the postulate, necessary both for science and for philosophy, that our experience is nowhere radically infected by falsehood, we gain definite results.

That which is highest in our experience of the reality which the universe everywhere discloses must also take the leading place in our synthesis of meanings. The content of the ideal, which is absolute for our personal life, must be decisive for our view of the universe. The most scientific and obvious thing for us to do, if we seek to know the nature of the real, is to investigate the witness of the religious consciousness, to do so critically and without neglect of the meaning of experience at other, co-ordinate, or lower, levels. Truth must exhibit the mark of coherent system as of a 'world,' and that system must express proportion and be all-conclusive. Applied to the knowledge brought to us, in contemporary light, including the various grades of appearance along with the higher testimony of morality and religion, a scientific total view must be stated in terms of theistic Idealism.

We will remind ourselves again of the great result of our initial enquiry regarding the contemporary mind. The judgment of value is also, if correctly made, a judgment of truth, a proposition concerning the reality disclosed through the system of its appearance. "The Absolute, if we are to use the modern term, is not unknown. According to a fine phrase of

[1] Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, p. 449.

Professor Laurie's which I have quoted—its predicates are the worlds." [1]

Relativity, in its positive aspect, enforces the lesson of scale plus system. The fact that there are different levels at which reality appears is to-day realised, as never before, by scientific thinkers in virtue of insights gained by scientific research. The real issues in contemporary thought lie beyond Naturalism and within idealism. The question regarding idealism is how to read the significance of 'degrees' within a system, and what is the value of the finite individual (more particularly the human person) within the Whole.

Pragmatism has not been able to maintain itself simply because it neglected the necessary implications of system and the meaning of a 'universe.' The New Realism [2] is merely an illogical compromise. The various forms of Monism, materialistic and pantheistic, break on the rock of the moral values.

"The necessities of the intelligence are, in the last resort, the same as those of morality and religion. The True and the Good make the same claim to systematic wholeness. The principle which is ultimate for morality is the perfect Good by which religion holds: it is also the absolutely self-explaining and self-determining reality which the intelligence demands. It is that in which all things subsist. The intelligence cannot, nor should, find rest except in assured knowledge of that principle. And natural science, as it comes to its own, will be less and less

[1] Pringle-Pattison, op. cit., p. 215.

[2] See on this point Haldane, *Relativity*, pp. 66, 282; and May Sinclair, *The New Idealism*, pp. 311 f. and throughout.

able to omit to refer its phenomena to it for their final explanation. In other words, I believe that the time is coming when convincing testimony to the spiritual nature of reality will be borne by the sciences (merely 'natural' no longer)." [1]

In the above-quoted passage, Sir Henry Jones lays stress upon the essentially philosophical demand for a complete and comprehensive view. Natural science has its own domains and these can be controlled by its own categories. But it needs to be recognised that the methods which give competence within restricted fields gain their power by stooping to conquer. They abstract from the totality of meanings. In particular, they place on one side the relations of the facts with which they deal to the mind which understands them as facts. This inevitable limitation philosophy has first to point out and then to overcome. It has to consider the scientific facts in their relation to mind and spirit and in their subordination within the whole of appearances. The quantitative method has its own limits, and so have the physical, the chemical, the biological, the physiological, and even the psychological methods their limits. They deal with selected aspects of the facts, and they deal with these in isolation. It is for philosophy, for a genuine synthesis to restore the significance of the facts in their grades of value and in their relations. The ultimate aim of mind is wholeness of meaning and truth, just as the concern of religion is with wholeness and the good.

In Pragmatism we have the extreme form of reaction in favour of the 'many,' while in monistic Absolutism

[1] Sir Henry Jones, *A Faith that Enquires*, pp. 31 f.

we have the extreme form of interest in the one. Pragmatism neglects system; Absolutism neglects comprehensiveness. Idealism has for its problem the presentation of a view of the universe which neither absorbs the many into the one nor reduces the one to a mere member of the many. The solution of the problem lies with the idea of Spirit. Spirit scatters as well as gathers: it overpasses substance in the inner wealth of its content and in the differences which it unifies in itself. It has livingness and is love;—not the blankness of the undifferentiated Absolute, but the vital fulness of the Creator-Redeemer and indwelling Spirit of all that lives and has its being in Him. Even at the scientific level something like the distinctively Christian idea of God springs to the mind as the necessary solution of the chief questions regarding ultimate issues.

"'Irks care the crop-full bird? Frets doubt the maw-crammed beast?' It is man only that is so troubled, and that because he is allied to God. In man the infinite is inherent and of his essence. That is why he is not satisfied unless, either through feeling or through thought, it has come to him that he is more than he has taken himself to be."[1] I think such a reflection as this sets forth an essential feature of the motive towards completion in thought and in desire which philosophy shares with religion. It also sets forth that alliance between spiritual aspiration and intellectual endeavour which marks the best modern thought. Now and again we come across people who set small store by the intellectual virtues, but that is because they have misread the lessons

[1] Haldane, *Relativity*, p. 394.

both of heart and mind. "Man grows as his knowledge widens, and as his interests extend: that is, he grows in the degree in which he goes out into and takes possession of his world. The universe of the little man is small and it is very powerless and niggardly. It helps him very little, and leaves him very poor and impotent. The universe of the great man is itself great: it is the instrument of his purposes as well as the content of his intelligence; and its bountifulness knows no limit."[1] If there is one thing more than another that the growing appreciation of the vastness of the universe may teach us, and the still greater wonder of the meaning of life and of personality, it is that we are 'citizens of no mean City' and that our feet are set in a large room. Now there is not the slightest reason why we should simply and forthwith take even the best manifestations of the modern mind to be either altogether exact or even supremely important. Every age, like most persons, must have the defects of its qualities. Knowledge is the thing we really seek: if the modern mind gives us genuine knowledge then it meets our need. There can be no doubt that in many departments of enquiry modern thought is making great additions to our stores of information. Careful investigation will cause us to say also that it is adding in some respects to our knowledge of ultimate realities, to knowledge in the genuine sense of the term. It would be a begging of a very great question if we did not allow that it is at least possible that even the modern mind may be able to learn something from the great systematic thinkers of earlier generations. Doubtless there is

[1] Sir Henry Jones, op. cit., p. 167.

progress, on the whole, even in philosophy, but it may be progress merely in the application in detail of knowledge which is already philosophy's possession. A superficial view of the significance of contemporary thought may give the impression that all that is worth knowing is gained through recent scientific enquiry. A deeper view of the achievement of mind may warrant Dr. Bosanquet's words in the Preface to his first volume of *Gifford Lectures*: "Indeed, I do not conceal my belief that, in the main, the work has been done, and that what is now needed is to recall and concentrate the modern mind out of its distraction rather than to invent wholly new theoretical conceptions."

But, it will be asked, is there to be no progress in philosophy? How, one might retort, can there be progress if no definite ground is ever to be recognised as gained! "There is no progress in a Penelope's web. Problems of thought are deepening and ramifying, no doubt, from generation to generation; but this is just because an advance has been made" (B. Bosanquet, Preface).

The history of philosophy lends no countenance to the idea that there is no central body of philosophical thought which has become humanity's possession. That history is not a record of the progressive correction of defective opinions. On the contrary, it shows that 'in spirit and in truth,' though not in expression and in precise detail, the problems before the greater thinkers have been identical in all ages and that their solution does not radically vary. The great schools of Grecian thinkers are in essential agreement with the great idealists of the present age. The influences which affect the approach to and expression of

the central body of philosophical thought, i.e. Theistic Idealism, are merely influences which manifest the special and restricted preoccupations of a particular age. In this age that approach and expression are formally influenced by our concentration on physical and biological sciences: that the approach thus effected works in every sense to the advantage of ultimate knowledge is open to serious question: I hope to show that on the horizon there are arising new avenues of approach that may help us to see even further into the truth than we can by the restricted method which is dictated by our preoccupation with certain branches of scientific enquiry. Whatever advantage the modern thinkers may have over Plato, Aristotle, and Plotinus does not lie in capacity of interpretation, but in a greater command of evidence and materials. The special temptation of the moderns is to be mastered by some department of knowledge. Released from that danger the great modern systems of thought tend to reproduce the salient features of the ancient idealism. The conflict of extremes in contemporary thought—Monistic Absolutism against the New Realism—is but another illustration of the constant tendency of constructive thought to sacrifice either the whole to the part or the part to the whole. Nor is the outcome of the controversy likely to be other than a confirmation of Theistic Idealism. The truths of the 'concrete universal' and that subject and object both fall within knowledge are not capable of being permanently obscured. If they are obscured —and to some extent they are so obscured by some who have their portion in the modern mind—the New Idealism can be counted upon to drag them into the

daylight and to restore to us, in modern terms, the central insights of philosophy. This lesson—a lesson regarding the meaning and value of the speculative Theism which is really philosophy's main current—is one which age after age gains reinforcement as well as wider expression. That the main current of modern Thought sets in the same direction I shall seek to show—it is the first part of my task. I cannot do better now than sum up these reflections in Viscount Haldane's words (*Relativity*, p. 8): "When read in the light of certain things which we have learned to-day, the great systems of reflective thought suggest convergence on principles reached in common, principles which harmonise in their main results, how different in expression they appear. No doubt there have been intense controversies—controversies in which direct denial of the truth of previous ideas has been placed in the forefront. But in the end it has seemed as though, even in these cases, the negative had in the main become incorporate with that against which it was directed, and that a freshly stated and more comprehensive result has been the outcome."

We have sought to detect the main drift of the current of present-day thought. I might have chosen other aspects of thought than those I have dwelt upon, but that would have meant, in fact, diverting our minds from the central issues. In any case, I am confident it would have meant a confirmation of the results which we have gained.[1] Viscount Haldane, at the beginning of his book on *Relativity*, mentions

[1] I have in my book, *The Grounds of Christian Belief*, given other indications of the revival of Idealism of a Theistic type. See pp. 16 ff. and 46 and 84 f.

the contemporary loss of 'settled conviction.' The only remedy is the exposition of conclusions based on reason and knowledge, and these must be gained through "the survey of the general field of knowledge in the light of principles which are fit to be accepted." Such principles we can only reach by a critical analysis of the results of science and by the synthesis on a philosophical method. So doing, we reach not only the main stream of modern thought, but also the main stream of the unified knowledge of all ages. It is something to know the mind of our age, but it is more and more satisfying to get into touch with the thoughts of the greater thinkers of all time. One of the chief discoveries that will come to us, if we get back to the past, will be that in all ages the great ultimate questions have been identical, and the answers which have been given reveal a remarkable inner harmony. "When we penetrate to the creative energies which have moulded the convictions of the greater thinkers, we see that they are inwardly urged by the same questions as those on which depend our weal and woe. Hence a living community of interest which not only brings us into sympathetic and fruitful touch with these old philosophies, but reveals the philosophers themselves as co-workers in one and the same great task—that, namely, of reclaiming, for this present existence, the reason and the soul which are its spiritual birthright."[1]

The recognition of 'degrees,' the principle of the 'autonomy of the sciences,' will yield, so we may anticipate, fruitful results in the fields of moral and economic research. Already it has produced a rich result in the realm of the natural sciences, and has

[1] Boyce Gibson, *R. Eucken's "Philosophy of Life,"* p. 30.

proved a great instrument of emancipation for the wider thought of the age. The strict limitation of the natural sciences to their own legitimate field leaves an unhampered scope for the philosopher in his search for reality and meaning. The main practical lessons, for students of ethics and religion, is that the method which is required in any special and restricted field must be determined by the characteristics of the facts into which enquiry is to be made. There must be a final correlation of all meanings, but each particular science has its own rights, and has now gained its own freedom. Such has been, so far, the great achievement of the thought of the age, and it gives to our knowledge a universe a theory of which, gained by undue simplification, will no longer avail.

When we consider that the leading result of the synthetic work of the present generation has been the vindication of the principle of value, and a large justification of theistic Idealism, this should teach us one great lesson.

Some years ago it seemed to many as though, for reason and thought, the instincts and convictions which made man's higher heritage were steadily undermined. They were left to occupy some vague sphere along with an inscrutable 'Power making for righteousness,' or they were regarded as being 'the last weaknesses of noble minds.' All that is now changed, and the lesson of it all is that the intellectual powers of man and 'the invisible things of God' unite to make clear the deathless power and reality both of the aspirations of man seeking goodness and truth, and of the truth and goodness which, seeking, he can find. "Knock, and it shall be opened unto you."

CHAPTER III

THE CENTRAL AND RESIDUAL PROBLEMS

At the present stage of our enquiry we have arrived, by the logical method used in scientific research and in the correlation of concepts, at an elementary scale of categories. We have found that, for a total view of 'meanings,' the moral values occupy a crucial and decisive place.

This recognition of the levels of appearance forms the meeting-place of contemporary science and philosophy. No longer does science claim an exclusive right to the solution of ultimate problems. No longer does philosophy neglect the actual knowledge gained from observation. The starting-point is the assumption of system, but the material of knowledge is to be found in the actual phenomena—'the world as it seems,' in Viscount Haldane's phrase.[1]

The great difficulty regarding significance of moral valuation arises from two leading considerations—only in actual persons can the ideals be realised and only if the persons themselves are conserved can the values which they realise be themselves conserved. The belief in 'immortality' is demanded by reason dealing with the real bearings of the place of the finite

[1] Viscount Haldane, *Relativity*, pp. 180–5. See also Pringle-Pattison, *The Idea of God*, pp. 217 f., and May Sinclair, *The New Idealism*, pp. ix, 219–21.

self in the moral order of the universe, and yet the 'world as it seems' does not quite readily give us a manifestation of the place of the finite self in Being. We cannot, by clear and simple indications, see, for example, if the concept of immortality has assured foundations.

A strong *prima facie* case can be made out for the contentions of those who either deny the truth of the idea of immortality or who hesitate about reaching any clear decisions regarding it. Perhaps no recent thinker has more clearly set forth these difficulties, in their contemporary form, than Dr. Bosanquet in his Gifford Lectures, *The Principle of Individuality and Value* and *The Value and Destiny of the Individual.* We shall not go far wrong if we consider these difficulties in the light of his statement of them. They appear formidable as presented in his impressive pages. Later, we shall find reasons for judging that they are not so formidable as they appear—but we have not arrived at that point yet. Dr. Bosanquet has one main contention, running through the whole of his work, viz., that "what really matters is not the preservation of separate minds as such, but the quality and achievement which, as trustees for the universe, they elicit from the resources assigned to them." He recognises, and strongly affirms, that from the "point of view of finite experience, the purpose of life consists in 'soul-formation'"—"the universe could not truly be thought of as a place of pleasure, nor even of probation and justice: it would be nearer the truth to think of it as a place of 'soul-making.'"[1] But he does not mean by that what many would

[1] *Individuality and Value*, p. xviii, and elsewhere.

consider he ought to mean by it : he does not mean that the soul gathers up within itself and carries onward ' yonder,' for ' a life beyond life,' the gains and character achieved through strife. He rather means that these gains are gathered into and housed in the Absolute, transformed and transcended. In our experience they are, as Mr. Bradley taught, appearance only : only in and for the Absolute are they reality, and that in a sense beyond our appreciation.

Dr. Bosanquet's conception of the Absolute and of the significance of finite experience has awakened much discussion. Professor Pringle-Pattison, in his Gifford Lectures, subjects it to acute criticism. The issue gains clear expression in the title of the pamphlet containing the discussion of the point between Dr. Bosanquet and Dr. Pringle-Pattison, " Do finite individuals possess a substantive or an adjectival mode of being ? " Bosanquet himself summarises his own theory thus : " It is more natural to suppose that our brief existence is the temporal appearance of some character of the whole, such as, in any case, constitutes a very real part of the finite individual's reality as experienced in the world. For what appears as a passage in time, the Absolute has need to express itself through us as very subordinate units. And there are indications which point in this direction, and suggest in what kind of worlds or higher complexes we might find our completion. While we serve as units, to speak the language of appearance, the Absolute lives in us a little, and for a little time ; when its life demands our existence no longer, we yet blend with it as the prevailing features or characters, which we were needed for a passing moment to

emphasise and in which our reality enriches the universe." [1] Saving for those who still cling to the outworn traditions of materialism, the extract just given states in concentrated form the alternative to belief in the reality and independent value of the finite 'self.'

But does it, after all, carry conviction? Does the actual experience of ourselves—all for that we have for guidance—bear out this rendering of the significance either of the Absolute or of our 'selves'? Does not Professor Bosanquet's theory cut clear against both the essential notion of the self and its most central experiences? Such a view leaves us with a number of qualities flying about loose apart from any necessary realisation in persons—a notion certainly directly contrary to the actual experience we have of ourselves. It refers us from something we know in our immediate apprehension of self to an experience which we can neither share nor of which we can form any really appropriate image.

Further, it is in flat contradiction to the testimony of social fellowship and of the religious consciousness. The more we pass away from the self-centred 'claim and counter-claim' morality into a world of real 'spiritual membership,' to use Bosanquet's own illuminating distinctions, the more we find the merging of private interests to co-exist with a deeper, more intense sense of freedom and individuality. If we make our appeal to the great experiences it will certainly appear that the lesson is the direct reverse of that which merely sees, in love and in fellowship in

[1] *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, vol. xviii (new series), pp. 505 f.

one spirit, the denial, the absorption, the transcending of individuality. The deeper the spiritual unity the more profound the personal distinctions appreciated and maintained in and by that unity. The better the society the more clearly defined the individuals composing it, realising themselves in it, through whom it expresses itself. The conclusion which is drawn to the effect that the finite individuals are made to disappear, as personal entities, in the only ultimately real not only has no warrant in the only evidence available, but is directly against both the superficial and the deeper characters of that evidence. When once this is clear the whole stress of Bosanquet's argument is really in favour of the doctrine of immortality. No one has more than he fixed, and fixed rightly, upon the necessity of going beyond the view of the world as a place of pleasure ; no one has more stressed the ' main miracle ' of the universe as the making of souls, and therefore brought clearly into view the idea of a supramundane kingdom of God. The idea of merging of souls, their recombining and dissolution within ultimate reality, is one which is not altogether novel, though it gains original expression in Dr. Bosanquet's emphatic pages. Royce, in *The Religious Aspect of Philosophy*, gave utterance to what is, in essential meaning, the same idea. At the close of that book he writes : " At worst, we are like a child who has come to the palace of the King on the day of his wedding, bearing roses as a gift to grace the feast. For the child, waiting innocently to see whether the King will not appear and praise the welcome flowers, grows at last weary with watching all day and with listening to harsh words outside

the palace gate, amid the jostling crowd. And so in the evening it falls fast asleep beneath the great dark walls, unseen and forgotten ; and the withering roses by and by fall from its lap, and are scattered by the wind into the dusty highway, there to be trodden underfoot and destroyed. Yet all that happens only because there are infinitely fairer treasures within the palace than the ignorant child could bring. The King knows of this, yes, and of ten thousand other proffered gifts of loyal subjects. But he needs them not. Rather are all things from eternity His own."[1] But such was not the view in which Royce came finally to rest, and in his later books, *The World and the Individual* and *The Sources of Religious Insight,* he shows the definite impossibility of retaining a view of the universe which empties the idea of the finite self of all meaning. In these later works Royce gives clear expression to the deathless significance of human personality.

Now here is the crux of modern thought in relation to theistic theory : The fact of the objective reference of the spiritual values, with the regulative place of the moral values, is not denied ; the question is regarding the value and destiny of the individual—the problem of immortality.

The question of immortality gets the first part of its solution (rather of the approach to a solution) from ethics. Underlying the attitude of science as well of morality is the belief that the universe is a rational whole. We have already seen the implications of this attitude—e.g. in our reference to Professor A. Campbell Fraser's Philosophy of Theism—for

[1] Josiah Royce, *The Religious Aspect of Philosophy*, p. 483.

belief in God. Right at the very heart of the ethical problem lies the demand for a righteous Ground of the universe. This demand is essentially a religious postulate, and is at the same time a demand of the scientific mind. When we once see how impossible it is to account for the universe on naturalistic lines, how every attempt so to do is merely the impossible attempt to interpret the higher by the lower, we are compelled to explain the universe by the spiritual values, by the creative spiritual energy which moulds souls. It is quite impossible to give any clear expression to the ultimate meaning of the ethical ideal if 'this world' is all. Nor can we state the goal of the moral advance of humanity in any terms which do not mean the supramundane kingdom of God. The assumption that this is 'an honest world,' the real form of the scientific and religious postulate of its 'trustworthiness,' is based not upon confidence in any unrelated ethical principles but upon the conception of God. There must be, in order that these confidences may be justified, the moral Ground of the world. This means confidence in a Person: for it means trust in a character, the character of the Supreme Reality and Power. "The Great Soul of the world is just."

Well, that is the confidence—a confidence underlying both the scientific attitude of mind and also the ethical consciousness. And it is definitely *a religious attitude.* When given its full statement it becomes the conviction that God is the Ground of both the natural and the spiritual order, and that these stand in a teleological relation within the whole which is what it is through the idea of Good.

From whence does this assurance flow? It has for

its centre that spiritual trust and confidence which grows out of the soul acquaintance with Deity. The supreme issues of modern thought, no less than the permanent problem before humanity, look for their answers not within the lower levels of science, nor even within the higher levels of ethics, but through the witness of the religious consciousness. The problems raised by questions of moral values and of the place and worth of the soul must find their solution at the definitely religious level or not at all. The ethical level depends for its maintenance on the religious level simply because the guarantee and ground of the moral order must be in the character of the supremely real Being. *The ultimate moral problems*, problems forced on the mind by reason operating with a scientific scale of values, and dealing with the whole of experience, *will remain on our hands unless we take account of the distinctive and characteristic utterances of the religious consciousness.* The demands of system and comprehensiveness and scale drove us to ethics, and now infallibly the same demands drive us to study 'all that comes to us through religion.' For light upon the ultimate problems we must explore the religious realm. Now in our investigation of the testimony of the religious consciousness we shall notice in discussions which avail themselves of this testimony a certain reluctance to treat the subject-matter from the historical standpoint. This reluctance may, indeed often does, serve a useful purpose. But it raises at once important questions. What if these should really be special data, coming to us out of history, calculated to help solve the residual problems of personality, of the moral order, of the higher values

generally? Is a method which neglects to approach the historical matter, which fails to enter upon the comparative study of religions, likely to give us the results we need? Generalisations have their use, but if we remember the lesson taught by the failure of generalisations to explain individuality; if we remember the temptation to explain by reduction (a temptation which has too often prevailed in scientific enquiry), let us at least entertain the suspicion that in religion, as in all other departments of investigation, generalisations may fail to explain, and that it may be found impossible to explain the higher in terms of the lower.

A steady and consistent following of the principles of interpretation in the light of degree and importance and comprehension brings us definitely to a theistic Idealism. But when we have attained this as a general philosophical outlook, we are still left with great unsolved problems—the pathway towards the 'ultimate standpoint' still remains open and it beckons us forward.

Let us for a moment cast our minds back to the discovery which we made regarding the leading achievement of contemporary scientific and philosophical insight. The 'autonomy of the sciences' and the principle of 'degrees' are principles of very wide range of application. Supposing it should prove that, in the witness of the religious consciousness in general, and in certain aspects of history in particular, there are data calculated to shed light upon our ultimate problems in ethics and in religion and regarding the place of the finite self in Being. If it should so prove, it would surely be the part of wisdom to recognise the facts, and *it would only be*

another instance of the scope of reference of the principles of 'autonomy' and of 'degree.'

Our enquiry has led us to seek the solution of the ethical problem within the confines of religious experience and testimony. But where look for the reliable utterances of this testimony? This is a question which the philosophy of theism rarely frankly faces. It leads us to great conceptions of God and to great religious generalisations, but it rarely even mentions the historical sources of these ideas.

Yet all the while the actual definite rejection of pantheism and the actual statement of ethical monotheism in the contemporary philosophy of religion *originally came from the gradual enforcement of these ideas by the intensely monotheistic Hebrew prophets.* Throughout a whole historical course of an entire people up to their time, ethical monotheism, gradually and against fierce opposition, became established through the work of the eighth-century prophets. There is no more outstanding fact in history than this: nor one that is more systematically overlooked in the general philosophy of religion. Recent historical criticism only brings to light the organic connection between the life of the people of Israel and the development of ethical monotheism in their midst. "Step by step, through the slow process of the religious life, through the oft-times halting logic of spiritual experience, the religious thinkers of Israel were led to the moral conception of the future life and to the certainty of their own place therein." [1]

We have seen the logical dependence of the idea of immortality upon the monotheistic idea, and it

[1] Charles, *A Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life*, p. 310.

is important to grasp the historical sources of the sway of the idea. The contrast in this connection between Hebrew and Greek religion is most significant. "The remarkable thing about the Hebrew seers is their intuition of God as 'the living source of their life and strength and joy,' not as a mere first principle of thought, not as the substance of things, not as the mere 'end of patient search and striving,' but as the 'first principle of life and feeling.' And their work for the world lay in the bringing to an end of the entire mythology and cosmology of the age of fancy and fable, and the substitution for all this of the worship of one God, as something distinct and different from all the cults of polytheism, as a great social and ethical achievement, as a true religion that loved justice and social order because it loved God." [1]

Now this was the outcome of experience of communion with God, according to the witness of the prophets themselves, and, unless we reduce it to nonsense, it bears upon its face the evidence that the witness is true. In history it is the Israelite rather than the Greek civilisation which exemplifies the nature of religion. To note this is certainly to note something special and distinctive. To do it justice requires acknowledgment of the fact that here, and with far-reaching effect, we are dealing with the concentrated and effectual outcome of communion with God. "The glad hope of immortality rests, not on speculative arguments from the nature of the soul, but on the sure ground of religious experience." [2]

[1] Wm. Caldwell, *Pragmatism and Idealism*, p. 152.

[2] A. R. Gordon, *The Poetry of the Old Testament*, p. 160.

The philosophy of religion, if it is to make its full contribution to the contemporary synthesis of experience, must get on to this historical ground *whereon are the indications of a quite 'special' intensification of communion with God.* It is quite unworthy of fair-minded investigators to neglect these marks of 'special' discovery of God and of the value and destiny of the soul. The marks extend over many generations, and distinguish an entire age (ultimately they come to distinguish a whole people) from their contemporaries. And if their witness is true it is decisive for the question of the place of the finite self in Being. Further, if it is 'special' discovery it is mere pedantry to deny that it is 'special revelation.' In the matter of knowledge of God, 'revelation' is the other side of the same shield as discovery. "Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge." It is a revelation of the thing discovered. We may hesitate about applying the term 'special' in directions in which we are asked to apply it, but to deny the possibility of 'special' discoveries and 'special' revelations, *on principle*, is a quite impossible thing for a science which acknowledges the principle of the 'autonomy of the sciences' and for a philosophy which recognises that reality discloses itself at different 'levels.'

I contend that the reluctance of scientific theism to take definite account of the historical element in the study of religion is merely an instance of the power of the temptation to seek explanation 'by reduction.' It is of great interest to note that step by step this tendency to explain the higher by the lower has been met and overcome. Some of those who least allow

the importance of history in religion have had to contend against this tendency to gain even that measure of emancipation from 'reduction-explanation' which they have attained. "A Faith that Enquires"[1] well illustrates this point. Sir Henry Jones commences his third lecture thus: "In the last lecture we pointed out a grave difficulty in following the injunction of Lord Gifford and treating Natural Religion 'as a purely natural science, like astronomy or chemistry.' We saw that the method of a science depends on the nature of the facts it professes to explain; and the facts of religion are spiritual facts, and seem, at any rate, to stand in striking contrast, and even opposition, to all 'natural' facts."[2] Then he goes on to point out the inadequacy of any interpretation of higher and more complex sets of data by concepts suitable at lower ranges of experience. He also adds, in defence of the claims of wholeness and comprehensiveness, a warning against omission of any characteristic and distinguishing features—"A truth omitted from any system, or a quality overlooked in any fact, batters it from without."[3]

Now, just as the study which Sir Henry Jones terms 'Natural Religion' is hampered by the obtrusion of ideas and methods which really belong to a set of facts of a lower value and also by the exclusion of its own characteristic data, so, equally, if there are important data for the philosophy of religion to be found from history in general, and from the history of certain races in particular, it is the part of wisdom

[1] Sir Henry Jones, *Gifford Lectures*, 1920–21.
[2] Op. cit., p. 31.
[3] Op. cit., p. 33.

to use those data. It is not a question of disallowing the relative justification of those self-imposed limitations which makes philosophical theism so shy about history; it is a question of interpreting *all* the data available and of gaining an adequate synthesis.

We saw earlier how the ethical question regarding the place of the finite self, the moral postulate of immortality, turns upon our grounds of confidence in the character of the ultimate Power sustaining the universe. We saw also that this brings the question into the sphere of the religious consciousness, and it is only an extension of that same insight to see in history the indications of the profound results of communion with God. No reasonable view of comparative religious study will deny the supremacy of the Israelitish civilisation in religion, nor is it possible to deny that out of the history of Israel, in a special sense, the strong confidence in God and the hope of immortality have sprung. We do not fully collect the available data for the philosophy of religion until we go beyond even the limits of 'natural religion': and we shall also find that we do not interpret the data which come to us out of history unless we apply to them a suitable criterion of value.

An unacknowledged, or unrecognised, factor is regularly present in religious and ethical enquiry—present, I mean, even when the treatment professes to be 'without reference to any supposed exceptional revelation.' All the while the chief constructs for the philosophy of religion have come to us out of history. We may speak of 'natural religion,' but there is no religious theory which does not either depend upon ideas promulgated by religious teachers or show the

influence of these ideas by the very reaction from them which it expresses. If light on human problems does not come to us out of history, out of that history which is so much the record of the achievements of individuality, we may despair of finding sufficient light anywhere. Age after age, history has been built up by the struggles and attainments of the soul, and is the supreme sign of the triumph of the spirit that is in man. "While the subject or bearer of value is always in the last resort personality, it is equally true that the thing may be essential for the realisation of the value of which the conscious person is capable. The world is the environment of perennial life; ideals have to be realised by making it their instrument; mind must infuse itself into the mass that the goodness which it conceives may become actual. From this point of view history, in the widest sense, may be looked upon as the gradual process of the spiritualisation of matter; we shall see in it the successive steps by which mind gains the lead and things become contributory to value." [1]

The crucial importance of this question of the significance of history for religion is emphasised by the fact that enquiry in the ethical realm will not, by itself, suffice to answer our ultimate questions. *Nor will any enquiry which leaves out those results gained from fellowship with God,* which results can only be shown in the historical field. There are certain questions left on our hands by any theism which ignores the testimony of the historical religions. What if, after all, there should be new data, over and above those noticed by 'natural religion'?—if

[1] W. R. Sorley, *Moral Values and the Idea of God*, p. 123.

there should be such data they would be all the more welcome, since they might shed light on the problems left on their hands. It is not a question of something which may be ruled out a priori. It is the question merely, Are these things so? What if certain facts call out quite plainly 'Come and see'?

It would be a complete misunderstanding of the claim here made if it were thought that the emphasis laid upon the religion of the great Hebrew prophets is merely an arbitrary outcome of traditional dogma. I am affirming, in the first place, the function of evidences of the outcome of fellowship with God, of which history alone can give us the evidence. I have claimed that the data thus derived are of profound meaning in relation to the crux of theism. I have claimed also that it is much more easy for theistic theory to deny, or neglect dependence upon, this section of historical facts than it is really to escape from their influence. In thus affirming the importance of the history of religions I am really giving a liberal vindication to the truth of our indebtedness to all ages and to all nations. In order to do justice to Israel, it is not necessary to deny the light which comes from Greece and India and Persia, and from many other quarters. But a critical estimate of these contributions must put the light brought through the influence and teaching of the Hebrew prophets, in pre-Christian times, at the very top of the scale of importance. The questions relating to the moral order and to the value of the soul—the questions which are crucial, as we have seen, for theistic theory—turn upon the assurance of the righteous character of God, and *only within an ethical monotheism could sufficient confidence*

be found. And the Hebrew prophets certainly brought to the world, to a degree otherwhere previously unattained, the trust in a holy and merciful and saving God. The Christian idea of God is directly affiliated with the religious insight of the Old Testament seers, and it is well to remember that it was upon the prophetic teaching that Jesus took His stand.

Unless we take account of these historical considerations our synthesis of religious thought will fail. My suggestion is that it fails simply because of the conventional neglect of these considerations. There are residual problems connected with assurance regarding the character of God, and there are special data, especially in the history of Israel, calculated to answer those problems.

These special data really clamour for recognition. They are there, they are really open and notorious.

I claim that *neglect of these historical considerations has no more justification,* in the light of modern scientific method, *than had the earlier reluctance* of scientific enquirers *to pass from the mechanistic hypothesis* in biology to the adequate vital concepts. I claim that a philosophy of religion that, in the light of the actual new evidence, in the light of its need, of the unsolved problems if that need is not recognised, fails to pass on to historical ground for new data (yes, and, perhaps, new concepts) is merely guilty of the faults of inadequate collection of data and premature synthesis.

Please notice that, if we are called upon to recognise the demand for new concepts in religious theory, it is only another example of a process which, first in biology, then in psychology, then in the study of

'natural religion,' modern thought recognises and uses. It is but the application, to the scientific study of the witness of the religious consciousness, of the accepted modern principle of the 'autonomy of the sciences.' I will set forth the significance of this parallel in parallel columns :

Biology		*Religion*	
Partial Views.	Adequate.	Partial Views.	Adequate.
Mechanism.	Livingness.	A Lowest Common Measure.	Special Features in History.
Explanation by the least significant concept.	Explanation by means of scale.	No differential calculus *re* religions.	Reality disclosed at different levels.
		A harking back to Naturalism.	Explanation on Scale of Importance.

We have seen how the modern mind has vindicated the 'autonomy of the sciences,' has said that facts must be allowed to speak for themselves. We have seen, further, how the same mind has vindicated the principle of 'degrees' and of interpretation through 'comprehensiveness' and 'degree of importance.' Apply these notions consistently and you will get to the supreme importance of the witness of history. Such witness must be estimated according to its contribution towards solution of our final and central problems. Not by any breach with logical method do we come to study the history of religions, but by every warrant of scientific principles. By the same warrant we may get on even further still.

It does not require here any elaborate presentation of the facts which justify the claim that in Hebrew prophecy we have, at the pre-Christian stage, a quite unique contribution to the hope and light of the world, centring on the points already indicated. The evidence is only more and more clearly brought out through the results of careful criticism, historical, higher, and comparative. In this relation it is well to remember that " the sun shines none the less brightly because the spectroscope had discovered the elements of which it is composed." [1]

For a total analysis and collection of the data relating to the testimony of the religious consciousness there is nothing for it, for any impartial and scientific mind, but a concentration upon the historical religions, and especially upon the prophetic element in the religion of Israel. This is the Rubicon, and we must pass over it. There was a Rubicon to be passed over before contemporary thought emancipated itself from the mechanistic limitation regarding biology. There is this Rubicon regarding the study of religion, and every reason why we should get across. So doing, you gain ground which can be held, you occupy an impregnable strategic position. *So doing, you carry scientific Theism,* horse, foot, and artillery, *into the historical field,* without the loss of a single ambulance waggon. And you do so by every warrant of logical method operating with the problems in hand in the light of relevant data.

Having crossed the Rubicon, you have gained a most important stage in the modern restatement of belief. You have related your contemporary theistic

[1] F. J. Foakes Jackson, *The Biblical History of the Hebrews*, p. 102.

theory to the actual, and the most significant, evidence. Occupying this ground, you have every reason to anticipate that you may still further verify the scope of the principle of 'degrees': you may also find that, as Bergson says, "for a new object we might have even to frame a new concept."[1] *The question is one of fact, not of prior and limiting conceptions. We get over our Rubicon with all the apparatus of scientific criticism,* and with the results of our initial survey of the field of thought. We get over with a principle of qualitative differences, which we can use, on the historical field, in the comparative study of religions, and with the criterion of system, i.e. wholeness, with comprehensiveness. The evidences in institutions, in literature, in history generally, of a special concentration of the results of communion with God, may well prove of decisive importance for our knowledge of Reality. Our task, therefore, includes a correlation of the light which comes to us from the history of Israel with all the rest of our knowledge and with a sense of proportion.

The underestimate of the historical element in religion often rests upon a too-strictly intellectualistic notion of the self. Not only is God demanded by the thought of man; will and desire also cry out for Him. Feeling, understanding, and will constitute in the soul one organic unity, and, in history, where we gain the signs of the action of personality, we discern the characteristics of man's quest for God. "There is no intellectual truth apart from a spiritual truth, and this means nothing less than the transformation of the world into cosmic life, an apprehension of reality from

[1] Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 51.

within. The assumption underlying this is that a spiritual life transcending the human forms is the ultimate basis of reality. Man's own task is a continuous striving and upward endeavour, a pushing and climbing up, an increasing struggle against unspiritual and half-spiritual resistances. In this struggle there is no fruitful knowledge that is not rooted in life-synthesis." [1] History's pages record such a striving and by means of the record bring us both light and strength. The inner significance of history is the effort of spiritual life towards more complete command over all that is outward and unspiritual. Religion is an action whereby the finite self appropriates and uses the life of the Spirit. *History means Action: the triumph of the spiritual deed:* the work of the energetic soul. Further, *action* is revelation; 'a thing is what it does.' The theistic thought of the present day not only insists upon the place of feeling and will in a full conception of finite personality, but also insists upon an idea of God which goes beyond the merely static 'thinking upon thought.'

It is chiefly the clinging to the outworn, exclusively intellectualistic, conception of reality which leads to the undervaluing of history. Thinkers, like Rudolf Eucken, who have left behind the static notion of the Absolute, readily appreciate the profound significance of 'all that comes to us out of history.' The philosophy of the spiritual life can never get very far without recognition of 'the necessity of the mind's contact with *thing*.' [2] "Eucken is ever nobly insistent on Religion as precisely our need; and on the presence

[1] R. Eucken, *Main Currents of Modern Thought*, p. 94.
[2] Von Hügel, *Eternal Life*, p. 179.

of the Abiding and Eternal within all our persistent and passing (deeper) trials and sufferings, and in all the genuine productions (always so largely conditioned by History) of Science, Art, Philosophy, and Ethics." [1] No full conception of the life of the soul, and of the God Whom the soul discovers, can be gained apart from that warmth and inner fulness of idea which the historical sense alone can impart. In history we shall find, if we look closely, not merely vestiges of the flow of time, but signs and proofs of a spirit in man that gives to him understanding and appoints to him a task. From history also we may read the character of the Eternal in the works which He causes men to perform according to a pattern shown to them in the Mount.

If we apply a standard of comparison to the historical religions it will be evident that the leading place, before we come to consider Christianity, must be given to the religion of the prophets of Israel, on account both of its revealing contact with history and of its ethical monotheism (which became its chief content). There we have a distinct and pronounced line of religious development in harmony with the needs of the self and calculated to shed light upon the character of God, and thus to meet the final demands of reason in dealing with the questions of ethics and religion as these arise in the present age.

[1] Von Hügel, *Eternal Life*, p. 179.

CHAPTER IV

CHRISTUS CONSUMMATOR

WHATEVER other impression eventually was made by Jesus upon 'the common people,' who, at first, 'heard Him gladly,' and upon the circle of His disciples, it is at least certain that the first impression was that He was 'one of the prophets.' There were characteristic features in His own prophetic message, but that message was a genuine outgrowth from the prophetic circle of ideas. The universal note, of which we hear the first sound in the great moral prophets, was so accentuated in His teaching, that it was calculated to pass beyond Jewish particularism and to become a world-wide faith. The great intuitions of the prophets pass over into the Christian heritage of belief, confirmed and made available for all through the teaching of Jesus.

The prophetic element in the teaching of Jesus is not, however, His only point of contact with the historic beliefs of the people of Israel. Just as He accepted and carried to its inherent issue the teaching of the prophets, so He also used and transformed the apocalyptic message and hope.

The chief difference between the teaching of the greater prophets and the Jewish apocalyptic (which rose later than prophetism) was partly in stress upon the coming divine reign and chiefly in emphasis laid

upon the irruptive, cataclysmic character of the coming of that reign. Its coming is future, but is imminent: it will arrive suddenly and break in upon men.

When we call to mind the pronounced nationalistic flavour of the hope of Israel, we can well understand how the history of the people led to the progressive growth of apocalyptic Messianism. Instead of rising to universal empire, the people of Jehovah appeared to have become a thing of naught tossed about by the rise and fall of a series of heathen empires. Their experience did not quench their hope, but it transformed their expectation of the form of its fulfilment. Modified, it may be, by contact with Persian thought, its outlook took on both a cosmic and a dualistic trend. It is a witness to the profound and intense quality of their religious hope that, under the greatest strain, their confidence in God rose to such a height. Such a change in the external features of expectation of the spiritual hope does but emphasise the depth of the religious life of the people of Israel.[1] It is one of the gains of modern historical criticism that it gives us such revealing indications of the actual movement of the hope and thought of the nation. It discloses to us the real wonder and glory of the history of Israel, not in signs and portents, but in the theocratic

[1] For the place of apocalyptic hopes in the religion of Israel and in early Christianity see R. H. Charles, *A Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life*, and his *Commentary on the Book of Revelation* (International Critical Commentaries) 2 vols. (T. & T. Clark); E. F. Scott, *The Kingdom and the Messiah*; Von Hügel's *Essays and Addresses on the Philosophy of Religion*; Lily Dougall and C. W. Emmett, *The Lord of Thought* (S.C.M.); A. G. Hogg, *Redemption from this World*.

life of the people under the guidance of great seers and of men who enjoyed communion with God.

The two elements, the older prophetic, immanental strand of teaching, and the apocalyptic, irruptive, transcendental strand are both present in the teaching of Jesus. He utters parables about the slow, gradual growth and fruiting of trees and grain, whereunto He likens the unfolding and development of knowledge and of grace, but He also tells of the coming of the reign of God 'as the lightning' or bursting in upon men 'as in the days of Noah.' "If the Master of the house had known at what hour the thief would come, he would have watched." Neither of these two strands of teaching can, on the most critical showing, be excluded from the substance of the teaching of Jesus.

Yet, just as Jesus found the name 'Messiah' so complicated with popular and traditional conceptions, so alien from His own outlook that He applied it to Himself with reserve (preferring the title 'Son of Man,' which takes us closer to the heart of His own sense of vocation), so He used the accepted symbolism and phrasing of Apocalyptic to express His own deeper and more spiritual thought. He teaches not merely that the Kingdom is imminent, but that it is already in being. His own presence means, in a profoundly real sense, that it is here now with men. Hereafter, it may be soon (it is often His thought that it will be soon), it will come in power, but in principle and in spirit it has already come. Is not the Bridegroom even now with the disciples? Do not their eyes see the things which many prophets and kings have vainly sought to see?

Are these two different strands in the teaching of Jesus contradictory or are they complementary aspects of His message? Let us remember, first, that they were part of the common stock of imagery and conceptions then possessed by the people to whom He spake. To be intelligible to His age He must use them, and His use of them, conjointly and without refusal, but with His own choice of emphasis, certainly conserves for all time some features of a truly religious view of life and the world which apart from them would be limited and obscure. He used these two outlooks, and He unified them and so corrected their isolation. The possession of them both, along with His own contribution, is part of Christianity's permanent heritage.

The apocalyptic element is one that must be retained in any complete religious view of the world. One lesson—a lesson which we gained from our earlier survey of the problems of ethics and of the value and destiny of the soul—is that no solution of the ultimate ethical questions can be found apart from the belief in the transcendental, utterly other-worldly Kingdom of Heaven. The full realisation of the Good is in a higher world, in the larger change introduced by eternal life in a 'City that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.' The complementary truth is that here and now, planted and set in the heart and in human society, the spirit and principle of the eternal City should work and bear fruit. Such a truth reflects the fusion of the immanental and transcendental elements in the teaching of Christ. Our life is habitually lived at these two levels. "The thing most immanent in us is an invasive thing." It

is so now, and it grows secretly and quietly now, according to the principles of our present experience in time. But while we do well to do now our allotted task as though that which is natural were, at least relatively, permanent, we must do so supported by a hope which passes beyond all temporal limits. For, just as 'flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God,' and 'we shall be changed,' so we also look not on the things temporal but on things eternal. The retention of both, the immanental and the transcendental, and also their unification in an experience of God, the utterly Transcendent and yet closely Immanent One, is essential for a completely religious outlook and for a solution of our final ethical problems. "Christianity resembles not a circle with one centre, but an ellipse with two focuses. . . . Neither of these poles may be completely absent, if the Christian outlook is to be maintained. Yet the original germ of the whole vast growth and movement ever remains an intensely, abruptly Transcendental Ethic, and can never simply pass over into a purely Immanental Ethic. And the importance of that classical beginning ever consists in continually calling back the human heart, away from all Culture and Immanence, to that which lies above both." [1]

The true inwardness of apocalyptic hope, purged of local and transitory features, leads us not only to a grasp of the message of Jesus, but also to the appreciation of His work. I do not consider that it falls within the scope of this little book to do over again what I have sought to do in my *Can we dispense with Christianity?* and in my *Grounds of Christian Belief.*

[1] Ernst Troeltsch, *Das Wesen der Christenthums.*

In those books I have given an outline of the actual impression made by Jesus upon His contemporaries and have presented the main results of constructive thought dealing with the Christian data. What I now wish to do is to penetrate into the meaning of His saving work in the light of His teaching in its two aspects, immanental and transcendental, and His unification of these two outlooks. If it seems a grave omission not to discuss *ab initio* the question of Christian origins I can only urge that that question is discussed in many books which are readily available and that I have already, in other books, essayed the same ground. Further, the task of constructive restatement is not precisely identical with that of apologetic.

The initial recognition of the place of Jesus among the prophets of Israel is the key to an understanding of the work He performed. The Christian Gospel is a special intensification of a process which commenced with the fusion of the tribes of ' the children of Israel ' into a nation. Its continuity with their history lies in the fact that it is a history of redemption. The consciousness of redemption lies behind the national life of the people of Israel and determines their national consciousness of distinction from other peoples and of national mission. More and more this consciousness deepens and alien elements are cast out. Prophets arise and clarify the national awareness of mission. Even the disasters which come upon the nation are but a punishment for failure to rise to the high calling. Thwarted and disappointed in the enterprise of salvation, the hope of Israel does but take new form and, at last, with the failure of hopes for the world, rises to the hope of the supramundane Kingdom of God.

Zealots there are whom wisdom cannot restrain, and some who restrict the hope of redemption within very narrow limits, but at least 'a Remnant' maintains the undying hope of Israel, and becomes 'the Servant of Jehovah' to carry light to the ends of the earth. "Seemeth it a small thing that I should give thee to be my salvation unto My people Israel? Behold, I will give thee for a light to the nations."

Distorted it may be, marred by vindictiveness at times, the religious hope of Israel, though dashed to the ground, rises and takes even wider scope. Do the hostile world-powers leave this people but 'as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers,' faith rises above even the measures of this world, fastens upon the direct and intervening action of God, and symbol, as in apocalyptic visions, seeks to utter what no mortal can fully express.

The words which F. W. Myers used to set forth the resilience of individual faith may well be applied to the true Israel:

> "Lo, as some venturer, from his stars receiving
> Promise and presage of sublime emprise,
> Wears evermore the seal of his believing
> Deep in the dark of solitary eyes,
>
> Yea, to the end, in palace as in prison,
> Fashions his fancies of the realm to be,
> Fallen from the height or from the depth arisen,
> Ringed of the rocks or sundered of the sea."

The hope of redemption does not fail, though the form of the vision changes. In apocalyptic we see it in form most open to fossilisation and materialisation, but also purged from political aspirations, freed from worldly limitations, awaiting the touch of Christ to lift it to be the hope of the world. Those who were

first drawn to Jesus were from among those who thus waited for the 'consolation.' They found Him of whom Moses and the prophets wrote, and then found Him in the true succession of the sons of Israel.

One of the most striking features in the Gospels is the way in which the power of redemption told upon the disciples. In their experience we learn the whole secret of Christianity. It was an experience of redemption, and it was definitely the work of Jesus upon their souls. He won from them trust in Himself as Saviour. The impression He made on them was of a kind which made it impossible to put aside questions regarding who He, the Bearer of redemption, was in Himself. Right from the beginning, in Christ's training of the twelve, we get the characteristic connection between the acknowledged work of Christ and Christ Himself, the Doer. The redemptive action of God, implied in all the consciousness of the devout in Israel, was effectual, concentrated, and supreme in and through Him. In Him these disciples had met with the Father. Their confession, firstly of His Messiahship, then of His divine Sonship, came, not from a mistaken metaphysical bias, least of all from any mere telling, but from their evangelical experience of His work upon their souls, of Himself in the glory and strength of that work. The redeeming influence which Jesus exerted is the source of the apostolic theology because it was firstly the creator of the apostolic experience. That the same influence, the work of Jesus, after the power of an endless life, is still the source of a Christology which reproduces the essential features of Christianity will remain a fact so long as the Christian soul is impressed by Christ in

the way in which disciples and apostles were impressed. "No man can say that Jesus Christ is Lord save by the Holy Ghost."

As the effective concentration of the redemptive action of God, Christianity carries forward the characteristic of the religion of Israel. I mean that not only are there in it certain historical data, but that in the Person and work of Christ God Himself enters the field of history for our redemption. We are made certain of the work of God for us simply because there, in the work of Christ, He is. In the historic and continuous work and presence of Christ we have God with us. Otherwise we are left with the need for redemption unsatisfied. The word of Nature regarding God is not sufficient for the wants of the soul. If we have not in Christ 'the power of the world to come' we are without the assurances, without the actual aid and strength, which we most need. Nature may rightly impress us, as it did St. Paul, with 'His eternal power and divinity,' but the word of redemption, of new life and power, Nature does not, and cannot, speak. No mere body of ideas can meet the essential demand of the soul, nor even satisfy the demand of reason when confronted with the ultimate problems which turn upon the reality of an extramundane Kingdom of God. Facts, history, work wrought and still going forward, the power and manifestation of God in the midst of the years—these are the final religious demands and they are met by the deed of God in Christ. In that deed we behold among the actual happenings of the present day redemption triumphantly at work.

Because Christianity is the religion of redemption, it can quite squarely look the darker facts of life in

the face. It is simply not a self-evident truth either that God is love or that 'all's right with the world.' Conviction regarding these things does not spring from our perception of 'necessary truths of reason,' but is gained through the revealing facts upon which the Christian religion builds. It is because a supernatural redemption now operates that we are able to receive the word of forgiveness and to know the love 'which passes knowledge.'

And we both must and can know that to-day. It is a mistake to think that because the Christian religion is definitely founded upon its historical data that, therefore, it is known through, and solely to be accepted upon, authority. The believing soul will welcome the authority which bears witness, but it is itself directly concerned with the message. Conviction, after the spiritual sort, can never quite reach its genuine point of certainty, but it can say, "Now we believe, not because of thy saying, but because we have heard Him ourselves."

It will be well if we seek to make clear to ourselves what we mean by the historical basis of Christianity, for, though the actual teaching and deeds of Jesus are required both to account for the actual rise of Christianity and its constant preservation, yet it is not by an historical judgment, *qua* historical solely, that we get the actual organism of Christian knowledge. It was not a mere historical judgment which enabled His disciples to acknowledge Jesus as Messiah and Lord. It was a spiritual judgment, a judgment about the significance of His work and teaching for the spiritual life, a judgment about Himself, the Teacher, the Doer of the marvellous works. It was the way His per-

sonality told upon them which prompted the utterances of the believing consciousness. So it remained throughout the apostolic age. Not the pressure of mere facts, equally open to penetration of their meaning by all men irrespective of their spiritual and moral response, but the meaning of those facts for perplexed, sinful, but aspiring souls, the value for the life of the spirit of the One about Whom they were revealing facts, prompted the adoring and worshipful allegiance of the soul. They came to render to Jesus that worship which, for inheritors of the monotheistic tradition as they were, only God could call forth, because actually from their souls Jesus did call forth that worship. There is more than history, as history, can account for even in the days when He was here among men. He is performing upon them the work of God. We see the motive which leads to the Christian doctrine of the Person of Christ, to recognition of His place within the sphere of Godhead, there in the spontaneous yielding of implicit and unqualified obedience which only God can call forth because He has the right ; we see it operating in the first disciples. This motive continues to operate in the apostolic age and in the following generation in the Church. Gradually it gains intellectual expression. Its tremendous import for the believing view of final Reality comes not only to be felt but to be also intellectually grasped and expressed in appropriate forms of thought. Such, and not metaphysic in the wrong place, is the motive which, from the days when the disciples ' talked with Him by the way,' through the apostolic age, on to Nicæa and on to our day and generation, prompts Christology and gives us our bearings in the study of

the Christian doctrine of God in the light of Jesus Christ.

And we strike upon the material of Christian knowledge there in that penetration of the soul by the total significance of Jesus for salvation. It is a believing consciousness as wrought upon by the historical data. In the effects we read the meaning of the work. In the personal allegiance, response, and devotion we perceive the greatness of the contact of the spirit of man with the redeeming Lord. Before there can be any appreciation of the place of Christ in the life of the spirit the soul must be impressed by Him in the way in which He made an impression upon the first recipients of His salvation. The continuity of Christian thought rests upon the continuity of this impression and experience. *We*, as they, *are inwardly transformed and everything is changed*, even concepts and categories. This experience was great enough to transform the hallowed and ancient acknowledgment of the great 'I AM' into the confession of One God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity, and it effected that transformation because such a change alone did justice to the religious transformation brought upon souls by Jesus 'in the days of His flesh' and after the power of an endless life. The Jesus of history and the One Who works upon us the works of God, in Whom faith perceives the whole manifestation of God, are one and the same Worker and Revealer. That perception is still the motive which verifies the historic Christian estimate of Christ and leads us to make our own heritage of Christian positive and distinctive doctrine.

It is not then, merely, to the initial confessions of the first disciples that we turn for a complete grasp

of the creative source of Christianity. We appreciate those recognitions of His unsurpassed worth for their spiritual life, but *we have our own grounds of certitude in the same impression telling upon us* now as it told upon them. Nay, we have even stronger grounds than they had for a like full assurance of faith. The full grasp of the significance of Christ for the spiritual life of the individual and for the race was only gradually reached, and it is, in the sense of appreciating its range and outcome, still in process of being gained. Was not there that which Jesus implied when He said: "It is expedient for you that I go away"? Is not there for us all that amplification of the meaning of the work upon earth which we gain by the knowledge of the Resurrection? Have we not our part and lot in that personal, intensely spiritual, knowledge which prompted St. Paul's words: "Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet henceforth know we Him so no more"?

Now let me distinguish the above presentation of the contents of the Christian organism of knowledge from a view to which it has superficial resemblance. The contention that the essential facts that founded and that still maintain Christianity as religion, and both control and justify its theoretic statement, are not reached solely by an historical judgment, does not mean either that the Christian facts are not historical nor that the believing mind can escape from the control of the actual history. What it does mean is rather that here in the revealing facts about Jesus the historical and the spiritual meet and are made one. Such facts, disclosing such a Redeemer, in order to be fully grasped in their real significance—that is

to say, in order to be perceived as they are and for what they are worth, are the facts as perceived by the believing soul and as they count for that soul's highest good. The believing mind recognises what it finds in the historic facts simply because these facts have been in contact with the mind and are there received and there alone fully estimated. Nor are these facts given their full value until, in a judgment altogether personal and spiritual, the Person is appreciated to Whose self-revelation they minister. And to say this is but to seek to give expression to the absolute necessity for spiritual insight and enlightenment if we are to read aright the facts and to acknowledge truly the One Whom they disclose. " Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood did not reveal it unto thee."

It will be noticed that I do not go to any detailed building-up of the Christian facts out of materials from which the distinctive genius of Christianity has been eliminated. I take for my matter just that impression of Jesus which is ' broad writ ' upon the face of the Gospels and mirrored in the witness of the apostolic consciousness. I do so because, in the last issue, and on the most critical grounds, criticism can never do otherwise. *If Jesus can be known at all, He is discoverable in the pages of the Gospels.* Any other construction than that which seeks His image there must finally be reduced, for lack of matter, to hypothetical conjecture. The more ' liberal ' your outlook and the more definite your appreciation of elements of subjective impression in the early literature, the more your unconscious testimony to the range of the influence of Jesus. The subject eludes our grasp of detail

because *He could neither be hid nor completely presented.* Enough if the writers of the Gospels so manifest Him in their pages, as His image was impressed upon their souls, so that He may reveal Himself to us, if He looks out from these pages and looks into our hearts as He looked upon Peter, their task will have been accomplished. We shall then know why one of them wrote: "These are written that ye might believe, and that, believing, ye might have life." Then we shall have the witness in ourselves—and that is a greater thing: then the historical becomes spiritual, and the Lord Whom they declare becomes our contemporary.

"The purpose of the writers of the Gospels is not to present us with biography in the modern sense of the term. They write with the selective freedom of the preacher, and with the purpose of the missionary. Nor is the impression made by Jesus limited to the Gospels. The experience of the men of the apostolic age has its own evidential value. It is to the total impression, so striking in its inner consistency and living unity, that we should turn. That total impression the New Testament adequately enshrines and bears down to us. Jesus so confronts us in the pages of the New Testament that He is discoverable there. The writers have done something which is more permanently necessary than the provision of a biography of detailed accuracy. They have so mirrored Christ in His character and work, and in His redemptive significance, as to give us knowledge of One Who could call forth not merely their worship but their absolute surrender of soul: and they have so mirrored Him that He still bears witness of Himself." [1]

[1] F. W. Butler, *Can we dispense with Christianity?* p. 64.

Appreciation of the capacity of the New Testament literature to put us into possession of the image of Christ so as to make us, personally, aware of Him, is the point where we make contact with the material of Christian knowledge. It is, first of all, an awareness of Christ in His total (however, as yet, untheorised) significance. Included in the revealing data, and not a mere arbitrary addition to them, is the fact of the Resurrection. The conviction of the truth of the Resurrection is consistent with that primary view of Jesus which we form from the records of His earthly life. In itself it both sets the crown upon His achievement and is a part of the whole historical complex whereby Christ works upon humanity and upon the soul. It is the salient feature in that historical deed of making salvation universally effective which both consummates the work of Christ and frees it for its triumphant task.

Prior to this brief sketch of the sources of Christian doctrine we had gained an elementary idea of the contribution of the prophets of Israel to the hope of immortality, and had reached, by consideration of the inner motives of Apocalyptic, the chief historical grounds of belief in a supramundane Kingdom of God. We saw how definitely the solution of the chief moral problems suggested by moral philosophy dealing with personality could only be found within the religious sphere. First of all, we adduced the distinctive features of prophetism as historically given data for solution of the problems. We also claimed that by every warrant of contemporary thought such evidence should be allowed. It is a consequence of the effectual concentration of the results of fellowship with God that

we now regard the work of Christ as the supreme means of answering the ultimate questions in ethics and in religion which experience puts forward in our own day as in all past ages.

It is definitely as a manifestation of the 'powers of the world to come' that we regard the teaching and work of Jesus. The presence and active working of a supernatural salvation, straight from God, is both the initial and the constant note of the Christian gospel. It is not—at least it is not primarily—a call to self-help which sounds to us from Capernaum. It is rather the word which neither nature nor ordinary human experience can utter, a supernatural word because a redeeming word.

Now, if this word is true, if indeed beyond this house of our pilgrimage there are also houses not made with hands; if, further, the transcendental word of forgiveness may be spoken to us and strength given to 'overcome this present world,' then indeed the issues of life may, at last, be seen to be good. But not otherwise. Nor is there, in history and in experience, anything which can approach the message of Christianity for the creation and presentation of the hope of immortality and of answer and redress. That being the case, Christianity, in the strength of its own data and on account of its own distinctive genius, affords to us the chief means of solution of the final problems of the reason, in modern light, dealing with the ultimate issues in ethical and philosophical thought. No process, either of criticism or of synthesis, enables us to turn away from the final questions raised by modern experience and by modern critical philosophy. And these questions remain.

No one can be acquainted with the decisive considerations for ethical theory, as these are stated in such works as Bernard Bosanquet's *The Value and Destiny of the Individual* and Professor Sorley's *Moral Values and the Idea of God*, without seeing that no vindication of the moral meaning of the universe is possible apart from the immortality of the soul and the supramundane Kingdom of God. If Christianity brings special light upon such problems as these it will indeed have a special importance for contemporary issues. If it can be shown that, in the Christian fellowship of the soul with God in Christ, there is a present witness of 'eternal life' and a communion not made for death, it will help to solve a problem which is no fictitious product of the preacher's prejudice but the leading issue in contemporary ethics and philosophy. If it can throw into the scale just that special evidence, the weight of which can make theistic Idealism complete and rounded; if it can decide the issue, e.g., between the 'adjectival' and 'substantival' concepts of the meaning of finite individuality, it will indeed meet a modern need. If it is accepted, it can solve these problems. That it should be accepted I claim to have shown. That it can demonstrate itself to be true, through the weight of its own self-evidence, we have witness whenever we seriously turn to the pages of the Gospels. The next step for philosophy, serious about inclusion of all data and values, must be on to the historical field (with the recognition of the 'special' quality of certain data there): so passing on, it will find there the distinctive data of Christianity calculated to meet its present chief need. The merely ethical conception of the meaning of life cannot stand

by itself, and the justification of its own imperatives and ideals stands within the realm of religious thought. Either it must consummate itself in religion, in acknowledgment of immortality and the utterly transcendental Kingdom of God, or it must hark back to that materialistic view which denies the very problem it must set out to solve.

And the religion to which ethics must eventually turn must be redemptive. No view of life and of human destiny which is exclusively moralistic and legalistic can ever satisfy the whole nature of man and the factors of our experience. There cannot be any final dualism, but we are simply unable to affirm a spiritual unification apart from a transcendent God and in virtue of His revealing action. Thus Christianity remains essentially the religion of Humanity because it alone conserves the real interests or Humanism in harmony with a frank recognition of the essential limitations of any this-world ethics. The final problems of the reason operating with moral values are also the questions to which Christianity, alone among the historical religions, holds out any hope of solution. For a philosophy which keeps close to those lessons of experience which it is invoked to explain, transition on to Christian ground becomes eventually a logical necessity. "It is folly to believe that, for an epoch so deeply rooted in Christianity and in the religious forces of antiquity which are allied to it, there can ever be a new religion. It will stand or fall with the religion it has. The great problem of its existence will be whether it can conserve for itself this religious power, and transmit it, with its entire spiritual context, to the

great new nations now entering the horizon of the world." [1]

It was as religion, as a contribution to spiritual hope and assurance arising out of communion with God, that we studied the inner meaning of the teaching of the prophets. The conviction which finally blossomed into the belief in triumph over the grave grew out of the distinctive sense of the presence of God voiced in such characteristic utterances as this: "Nevertheless [i.e. despite the prosperity of the wicked and at last despite the darkness of the valley of death's shadow] I am continually with Thee. Thou hast holden my right hand." And it is as religion, as the consummation of communion with God, in the experience of redemption from the power of this world and as the beginning of immortal life, that we must regard, in its essence, the genius of Christianity. It is the religion of supernatural redemption wherein the fellowship of the soul with God is perfected through the abiding presence of Christ. Theology arises when we seek to give expression to the implications for thought of the actual communion with God which the religion implies. "Though we speak of Old Testament theology, all that we can attempt is to present the religion or religious ideas of the Old Testament as held in the minds of the Hebrew people and as exhibited in their Scriptures. These ideas as yet form no theology. There is no system in them of any kind. They are all practical religious beliefs, and are considered of importance only as they influence conduct. We do not find a theology in the Old

[1] Ernst Troeltsch, *Die Absolutheit des Christenthums und die Religionsgeschichte.*

Testament ; we find a religion—religious conceptions and religious hopes and aspirations. It is we ourselves that create the theology when we give to these religious ideas and considerations a systematic or orderly form." [1]

The spiritual convictions which are involved in the distinctive Christian experience are the truths to which theology gives systematic expression and development. The definite subject-matter of theology thus includes an historical element conjoined with the witness of the experience awakened by contact with these facts. The experience itself has its own objective and historical ground. When fully brought out, Christian doctrine has for its goal a statement of the character of the unseen Reality disclosed in and by the revealing experience. This fact at once brings Christian theology into intimate connection with ideas reached by sound thought in all directions. There abides the distinctive Christian subject-matter, and it offers its own special contribution for a scientific view of God and the world. Any attempt absolutely to separate Christian doctrine from the objective and theoretical judgments of science and philosophy is sure to operate unfavourably to the interests both of Christian thought and those of science. Such an attempt is made when there is the effort, as in the case of Ritschl and his school, to distinguish the truths of Christianity from metaphysical doctrine by separating the value-judgments of religion from theory and by confining the significance of Christianity to value-judgments so regarded. Such attempts are based upon a mistaken appreciation of the real scope of reference of judgments of value and also upon a

[1] A. B. Davidson, *Theology of the Old Testament*, p. 11.

failure to realise that, in dealing with truth and reality, metaphysical concepts are absolutely necessary. Indeed, we do not get beyond the very restricted standpoint involved in an empirical psychology unless we recognise the inevitableness and value of metaphysics. Even the initial utterances of faith, the raw material of a completed ethic and theology, involve some metaphysical ideas in so far as they speak of God and of the power and grace of Christ. You do not escape from metaphysics, a doctrine about the ultimate realities, even if you hark back to materialism. The question is only about the right metaphysic and the available data for gaining such a view of reality.

We see the process of formation of a Christian view of God and of the world going on in the earliest Christian age. Within the pages of the New Testament we can discern not only the initial religious impression made by Christ, but also a continuous advance in the theological conceptions which seek to do justice to that impression. More and more we see, especially in such large attempts to cover the new theological ground as the Epistle to the Hebrews and the later Pauline Epistles, attempts to draw out implicitly the meaning of the Christian knowledge of God in Christ. The minds at work on this great constructive task, this first Christian apologetic, and this first restatement, are motived by those spiritual considerations which then, as now, make the Christian religion and call forth its philosophy. A faith which is conscious of its own meaning and which reaches out to a complete presentation of its contents must always issue in a doctrine of God and the world.

If we apprehend aright the motives which prompted

the earliest attempts towards a Christian system of thought we shall have in our hands the key to a critical estimate of the value of all attempts towards theological reconstruction. The task of Christian theology is prescribed by the Christian experience of Christ, as that is normally expressed in the apostolic consciousness mirrored in the New Testament and constantly reproduced within the Church and to the Christian soul. For any accomplishment of such a task there is required both honest reflection and a genuine appreciation of the Christian experience. The experience which calls forth the doctrine is identical with that which prompted the historic Christian theology. There are limits of restatement simply because there is a definite and precise subject-matter. The continuity of Christian theology rests upon the continuity and definiteness of the Christian experience of Christ. The issues here are moral and spiritual, and concern our knowledge of what is ultimately real. The witness of Jesus unto Himself, the impression that is reflected to us from the pages of the Gospels, the actual redemption thus brought with its own convincing power—these are both the material of Christian knowledge and the decisive constructs for its doctrine of God. Using this material, and reaching thereby a view of the universe which, through use of the Christian data, gives us a Deity having life and love in Himself, we gain an outlook which suffices to solve the supreme problems of life and of thought.

CHAPTER V

ACTION AND REVELATION

If the exposition which I have attempted to give of the characteristic genius of Christianity is right in its grasp of what is centrally important, it will be plain that the primary and distinctive thing both for religion and for thought is *work*—work performed by God upon the soul by the power of Christ. In this chapter I shall seek to vindicate this ascription of primacy to the idea of deed, of action, of energy, of work performed. I shall endeavour to do so by an analysis of the contents of the notion of finite personality and of the means of its maintenance, enhancement, and preservation. I have granted the importance of theory, but I have contended for the primacy of redemptive energy. I am all the more willing to defend this contention because I believe that it leads us, by a direct route, to appreciation of the very thing given in Christianity and also brings us to the thing essential for restatement in modern light.

The newer Idealism is distinguished from the older by its firmer grasp of the living quality, the ' thickness ' and intensity, of reality. Whether this be a result of incorporation into the body of systematic thought of certain intuitions emphasised by Pragmatism or a result in philosophy akin to that growing appreciation of the fulness and richness of the scientific field we

need not pause to discuss. No thinker of importance now contends for the 'thin' and 'static,' merely thinking, conception of the ultimate realities which once prevailed.

We rise to the appreciation of the richness of reality through first appreciating the variety, definiteness, and fulness, of appearance. Nowhere are we more impressed by this quality than in our dealing first of all with 'life' and then with human individuality. "Personality always impresses us as the most potent instance of individuality."

It is not possible to get an adequate idea of personality unless we discover its non-static quality. It is itself a contrast effect. It is and it is not, and is 'something evermore about to be.' Never is it anything very much unless it takes care to keep itself and to be more than now it is. To be a person means to be committed to an endless quest of oneself and to be obliged to hold fast what one has. It means not less than this when we say, speaking at a merely popular level, that so-and-so possesses a good deal of 'personality'—there is something distinctive about him, and that he has himself gained, and there is either hope or fear that he may lose it. The state of being a 'person' involves a contrast with the state of being a 'thing.' A higher value attaches to 'personality' than that which belongs to 'thinghood.' When, as a true estimate of the objective reference of value is formed, we grasp the truth that this higher valuation of the self means recognition of its higher place in the scale of meaning and being, we are, through valuation, on the road to a discovery of the real marks and powers of selfhood.

When we speak of a 'self' or a 'person' we mean something which possesses spiritual quality and has a mode of existence distinct from and higher than that of a 'thing.' Personality maintains itself by a constant active distinction of itself from 'thinghood.' Action, the overcoming of all influences in its environment which would reduce its essential standing and worth, not only in principle but also in degree, is the essential mark of personality. A contrast with anything mechanical is involved in any grip of the real meaning and worth of the self. It is not only a mere fact that mechanism cannot explain it: the deeper truth is that personality is not only other than mechanism, but is rather profoundly hostile to mechanism in any shape or form, practical and theoretic. Mechanism and personality, for science as for practical life—these things are not merely different things: they are at enmity the one with the other. To realise not only the difference but also the enmity is the beginning of the appreciation of the meaning of personality.

That action gives the key to the notion of selfhood is a fact which can be tested in every direction without chance of failure. Let us take it first of all in the intellectual realm. The concepts formed for the sake of scientific knowledge are never identical with the actual appearance of the things observed. Not only do they in form differ from those appearances (as the whole, e.g., of astronomy differs from the first impression made upon the eye by sun, moon, and stars). The concepts themselves are made by the perceiving mind as a result of its intellectual action. Even naturalism is no mere copy of nature.

Science is the transformation of sense-impressions into coherent and systematic theory. A rational construction of such impressions is the root matter in all investigations. The actual processes of the enquiring mind are themselves intensely active after a personal sort. Both a scientific epistemology and an empirical psychology unite in affirming action to be the root matter in the characteristic work of science. We cannot explain mental states in terms of matter and motion. These states are ultimately connected with movements in the brain and in the nervous system, but the phenomena of thought and feeling are separated from such movements by an impassable gulf. The values and laws which obtain in material things are not finally applicable to the self. The search for order and system rises from the demand for coherence of theory which the self makes. It is a postulate of the living reason. The actual achievement of system shows the result of the mental action of the living and thinking soul. The characteristic products of mind disclose the active energy of spirit, and by themselves demonstrate the transcendence of the self over nature and over mechanism. The spiritual significance of the self is the primary and most certain matter of knowledge. It is the thing present and given in and for knowledge in the most clearly defined sense, for it is itself the prior condition of anything being known. Subject and object both fall within this knowledge, and ' beyond knowledge we cannot get,' nor even be consciously outside of it.

Action gives the key to the notion of selfhood. It is so in the intellectual realm. Now let us test the truth of the matter in a realm which, though including

ethics and religion, does not either fall outside knowledge nor escape from reason's control. The independent and spiritual worth of the self or soul shown in the method of attaining systematic interpretation becomes all the more clearly evident when, with the full sanction of the principle of autonomy of the sciences, we consider the self in its own being and worth for itself. The true meaning of personality is in the inwardness and individual experience of each distinct soul. 'Secretum meum mihi,' is its charter of freedom. Not in what it is for others, but in what it is for itself we reach the nearest approach to an appreciation of the essential significance of the soul. We do not get any nearer appreciation of it till we do what is not completely possible, till we grasp its meaning in its wholeness, i.e. in its significance for God. An approach to that complete appreciation we shall yet attain by the progress of our logical method. Meanwhile, let us keep to the lower psychological realm. Even at this level, inadequate and incomplete though it is, the truth emerges that action is the supreme function and differentiating principle of the self. It aims at the maintenance and increase of its own—its very own—and unique idea and content, and seeks to make effective its own immanent idea. The expression of a genuine self is a free and independent work of the distinct soul in its unshared being and reality. Thought itself (surely in this like Reality) is active, creative, full of life, yet its active quality is but a pale reflection of the actual intense and vital being of the self which thinks, loves, and aspires. "A moral task is essentially one of which I can never say 'My work is finished.' Special tasks come to an

end. The work of offering my unique service, as this particular self, to God and to my fellows, can never be finished in any time, however great." [1] There is a passage of clock time, but the soul abides itself in its own opposing duration. That is the given feature of moral and emotional life wherein, for itself, the self abides after its own distinct mode of being. The self is not only other than a merely natural fact at any level, *it is also more than a normal temporal fact* both in idea and in concrete experience. Rightly speaking, the concept of immortality inheres in the correct definition of the self. " So He brings them unto their desired haven," because, from the ultimate standpoint, they have never been away from it. The lonely transcendence over thinghood, i.e. the soul's own ' lordship over the world,' not only reflects the transcendence of the ultimately real Being; it also is itself the soul's exercise of its own triumph over time. It goes, with the gains and losses of that conflict, unto ' its own place.'

" But in all this my own struggle with evil wherein lies my comfort? I answer—my true comfort can never lie in my temporal attainment of my goal. For it is my first business, as a moral agent, to set before myself a goal that, in time, simply cannot be attained. Woe unto them that are at ease in Zion. Yea, woe unto them, for they are essentially self-contradictory. . . . Whoever is awake, is content with the present in so far as the world means little to him." [2]

The religious meaning of personal life inheres in the normal activity whereby the self maintains its own

[1] Royce, *The World and the Individual*, vol. ii, p. 444.
[2] Op. cit., ii, p. 407.

characteristic form of existence. The mechanism of nature (not, of course, a finally real thing, but still a real appearance) makes an internal conflict the constant portion of the soul. The values of the realm of things, and of every appearance lower than that of pure spirituality, continually oppose the soul's own higher and personal order of things. It feels its right to be free over this lower range of worths, but it is grounded in and constantly impressed by things of sense. It is called constantly to overcome the sense-impressions in the interests of its own essentially free ' being-for self.' You cannot make any sense out of responsibility and especially of the deeper and religious consciousness either of guilt or of forgiveness apart from this transcendental freedom of the self. You cannot touch the fringes of any valuation of the life of the spirit till you see the place of action both for the practice and theory of the religious state. And you are shut up to it, for *the way back to naturalism is closed* for modern critical knowledge of the meaning of personality and its valuation. The religious estimate of finite individuality is not an addendum to our philosophical and scientific account of the self, but is involved in the notion, and the active quality of the soul in its religious capacity is confirmed not only by psychology but also by a critical noetic method.

There is no freedom that is not grounded in a still deeper absolutism. We are free to realise our idea. That is only another way of saying that we are under obligation to make effectual God's precise intention regarding us. And there is no freedom that is not originated out of grace; no awakening, no action of the soul, which is not a result of, a response to, the

prevenient and effectual action of God. I mean that these ideas are true not only for a positive theology, but also for both empirical psychology and a genuine philosophical method of enquiry into the witness of the religious consciousness. Contact with the all-penetrating life of the Spirit is implied, is actually given, in the very fact that the soul strives against sense-impression and does overcome to the degree in which it is rightly itself. The rest (all that falls outside moral victory and freedom) is neither an emancipation of the self nor anything other than a reduction of the soul in the scale of being. As the individual presses inwardly to gain its own life for itself in dominion over the outward, the living Spirit of God permeates it with His own saving action and power. *He is Himself the emancipating Environment which makes both possible and actual the freedom and true self-realisation of the soul.* He makes it possible because He creates the whole set of conditions in which freedom may be gained. He makes it actual by His constant saving action as the emancipating and perfecting Spirit.

The idea and function of religion is to solve the problem created by the contrast between the nature of the soul and its contact with material values and between merely natural instincts and the ethical organisation of society. The individual end is the attainment of free personality through response to the saving initiative of God. The social end is the organisation of society by the rule of spiritual principles into a Kingdom of God. Both are ends which are quite incapable of being completely realised within temporal conditions. They are transcendent ends

requiring that transformation of the self which means the possession of 'eternal life' and that radical transformation of environment, social and individual, which is poetically expressed in the term 'new heaven and a new earth.' The spirit of apocalyptic is the essential spirit of a genuine philosophy of individual and social life. "There exists no absolute Ethic still awaiting its first discovery, but *only* an overcoming of the changing situations of the world. There exists also no absolute ethical transformation of material nature or of human nature, but only a wrestling with them both. . . . Faith is indeed the very sinews of the battle of life, but life does in very deed remain a battle ever renewed upon ever new fronts. . . . The final ends of all humanity lie hidden within God's hands." [1]

A genuine philosophy of religion rests upon three fundamental notions: (1) Nature; (2) Self; (3) God. If either of these notions is left out of account no complete interpretation of the data can be attained. Nature is there as the immense background against which the self is seen and against whose values self strives. The self is there because it is the condition of anything been known and personally gained. The idea of God, without both nature and self, is empty and devoid of life. The notion of a God realising Himself in contrast with nature without the creation, emancipation, and redemption of the finite self is thin and vapid. So religion always teaches, and so we gain part of the meaning of the great saying: "I am the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Israel. He is not the God of the dead, but of the living."

[1] E. Troeltsch, quoted by F. von Hügel, in *Essays and Addresses on the Philosophy of Religion*, p. 194.

The strength of naturalism does not lie in the cogency of the arguments by which it has been defended, but in the weakness of the world's spiritual life. Naturalism is primarily an attitude towards life, and only secondarily, as a consequence of the life-attitude, a philosophical theory. It finds occasions for presenting itself with an appearance of impartiality on account of the intrinsic difficulty of maintaining the distinctive life of the spirit. Philosophically, naturalism is the extreme instance of the attempt to explain 'by reduction.' *In actual life it is the abandonment of the attempt to gain the soul* in the determinate conditions of its freedom and growth. Naturalism can always count upon gaining adherents. It is that cheap and easy solution of appearances conjoined with the similar attitude to life which simply 'happens.' It happens because 'that is first which is natural, and afterward that which is spiritual.' It is so on the scale of scientific valuation. The criterion of 'livingness' is 'after,' i.e. higher in the scale than mechanism—therefore more difficult to appreciate. It is so regarding the very life of the soul, because, to maintain the condition of being a self involves struggle, breach with the dominance of natural values, radical transformation of the soul in response to the saving action of God. Both in thought and life naturalism gets an easy victory because it appeals to our mental, moral, and spiritual slackness. This is abundantly frank, but has the merit of being true, though, I allow, it does not make altogether pleasant reading. Materialism can always easily influence the masses because it is capable of a very simple and elementary presentation. It appears obvious, but there is really nothing in it. There is,

however, one serious thing to be said about it, a thing which materialists constantly overlook: it is bound eventually to come into sharp conflict with the desire for happiness and to end by stultifying and dwarfing the soul which it set out merely to despise. Fortunately the materialist is rarely consistent—he unconsciously postulates a purposive self and credits material factors with accomplishing what only spiritual life can perform. "The Scripture saith: *The Foole hath said in his Heart, there is no God:* It is not said: *The Foole hath thought in his Heart:* So as he rather saith it by rote to himself, as that he would have, than that he can thoroughly believe it, or be persuaded of it. For none deny there is a *God*, but those, for whom it maketh that there were no *God*." [1]

In contrast with the premature synthesis attained by materialism we set the principle of a philosophy of the spiritual life. Our total view must be comprehensive, must contain a due sense of values, and it must explain. The spiritual life is a specific type of being. It does not consist in isolated faculties, but in a unity comprehending them by transcending them. It is an active, self-dependent life, capable of negating influences hostile to its own interest and of raising both its consciousness and its means of self-expression to constantly higher levels. The compresence of the universal Spirit is implied in its characteristic movement, for that is by establishing contact with an Environment higher than that of nature, i.e. a contact with the living and emancipating Spirit—God.

The importance for theology of this analysis of the implications of the spiritual life lies in its justification

[1] Bacon, *Novum Organum*, i, Aph. 23.

of the relative primacy of the concept, transcendence. The strictly intellectual argument which argues from the world as an effect to God as its 'eminent' cause may not be strictly scientific, but it has as its inner intention the expression of the felt transcendence which is implied in the moral consciousness and which becomes explicit in the spiritual life. The recognition of personality in God rests upon this witness of the life of the self. The immanence of God, or His effective presence, to which the teleological arguments endeavour to do justice, means that He is really and personally present in the universe. There are 'degrees of immanence,' and God is immanent as a result of this consent action; but the two ideas 'immanence' and 'transcendence' cannot be left in bare juxtaposition: they must be correlated, and it is one of the great features of Christian theology to have gained a total view which does justice to both these necessary concepts. A good deal of confused thought in theology arises from neglect of the transcendence of God.

The idea of action will help us in the formation of a sound philosophy of history. In the great organisations and in the inner movement of humanity, of which history is the record, we read an account of the more or less successful results of the conflict of man against depersonalising influences. There is constantly a breach with the lower and a transition to new standpoints. That which makes the movement possible is the actual spiritual life, which itself is grounded in something more than the historical. The inner meaning of history is the action of humanity in response to the action of God. At certain points in history, and in certain special directions, this

relation of facts and organisation to the work of the Spirit becomes luminous, e.g. in the Greek artistic achievements and in the Hebrew attainment of special competence in religion. We gather up into ourselves the gains of history, and its real contributions to spiritual life; when in and for ourselves, in the soul itself the chief lessons and impressions, artistic, ethical, and religious, live in us and become our contemporary possessions. The historical becomes present because it contains within it the super-historic Spirit. Of itself it reveals the movement of spiritual life, but that which it reveals is in fact only appropriated through a self-activity which lives, beyond history, through the strength of the spiritual realm.

The results of the action of God themselves reveal the character of the God whose presence they indicate. They cannot be read off directly, and their full appreciation depends upon a certain degree of both intellectual and moral competence; but they are plainly manifest in the entire natural system, with its various grades, and in the realm of history, and in that spiritual realm which thought, morality, and religion so plainly disclose. The action of God is the proof of God. Such a truth is something much more than any mere pragmatism. It is an important part of the discovery of the nature of the system of the universe through its characteristic effects. It is action which causes the knowledge, but what is thus made to be known is truth. Truth so gained has to be related to truth gained in all other directions, and only a just sense of importance (i.e. a philosophical scale of values) will enable us to fit in the various insight within the unity of systematic knowledge. The knowledge of God

rests upon a practical and religious basis, but what thus comes is genuine knowledge and only awaits consistent application and synthesis. Religion claims both absolute worth and final truth. Its claim to be true must be verified, and so it can never escape from the demand for intellectual defence and construction; but what it is is known from what it can perform.

Now all these features of religion, invasive and redeeming action, genuine knowledge of God by means of His work, freedom generated out of grace—all the prime elements of a complete view of the witness of the religious consciousness (based on psychology, but proceeding on to philosophy), find both their actual working and their complete unification in the Christian religion and theology. Christianity is absolute for religious thought, for it is itself absolute religion. Historically the actualities of victory over the world, of salvation in the intrinsic sense of the word, have arisen, in supremely effective form, from the historical accomplishment wrought by Christ. There again, however, and here, in most impressive mode, the historical is not merely fused with the eternal: the eternal and absolute confront us within history. The theological counterpart of this truth is the doctrine of the essential Deity of Christ. He confronts us as God when He works upon us the saving works of God. That it is so is a fact that can be put to the test. He imprinted Himself upon the mind of the New Testament Church, and with the same image and to the same effect He imprints Himself upon us now. More accurately and with less metaphor, the transcendent Person, in virtue of His endless life and in the power of His historic accomplishment, guarantees the truth

of the apostolic witness by still subduing us unto Himself. The data of Christian knowledge consist of this impression, historical, experienced, present. Christian theology is the systematic presentation of the significance of these data in all relations and directions.

Now this resting first upon the total weight, dominant but not detailed, of the New Testament testimony regarding Christ, conjoined with His identical influence now, as Spirit upon spirit, in the power of an endless life, must be distinguished from some views in theology with which it might appear to have certain affiliations It is no mere reliance upon subjective feeling. It is no attempt to evade theological difficulties and issues. I will try to cover these points under three general headings.

I. Subjective and Objective

First of all, in dealing with the creative sources of Christian faith, we are dealing with historic facts. The New Testament representation of Christ is not something which we have ourselves made, though it is something which we can only know perfectly in virtue of moral and spiritual insights. It is in this respect, though, of course, at a much higher level in both significance and in demand upon the soul, like an actual work of art. The picture produced by the artist is just there, it confronts us ; but it is not known for what it is as a work of art, as the very thing produced by the artist, apart from the capacity of the observer to appreciate it. There must be the ability rightly to value and estimate the work. Such value-judgment is then a judgment about definite

fact—an integral part of the ascertainment of the truth, a statement of fact and truth compared with which opinion about canvas and pigments is as nothing. To apply the lesson, the Christian fact is this—the historical record is there, and in it we behold Christ; but He Himself is more accurately discerned in all His historical and abiding meaning, as objective truth, by the one who has spiritual discernment than by the one who either does not possess or will not exercise such discernment. *The objective fact is interpreted within the experience which it creates*, and at no point does it cease to be the object which is thus subjectively appropriated.

But in what other way could we proceed? Shall we seek in this case, regarding the testimony of the New Testament, some evidence which contains no marks of this religious influence of Jesus upon the souls of disciples, upon the first Christians generally, upon the community which He founded, upon Christians in all ages? If we so seek shall we find anything? The answer to the last question is most certainly in the negative. The New Testament literature is so saturated with, so determined in form and intention by, the characteristic Christian awareness of Christ that you have no means whatever of proving any alternative rendering. Jesus, in the greatness of His worth for redemption, stands forth in these pages, and they are written that we may believe.

There is also a point at which the gospel representation of Christ may become our own assured possession. It may happen to any man, given an open New Testament and a witnessing Church, that Christ may work upon him those works which He wrought of old and

which gave the New Testament its essential features. When that comes to pass the divine action of Christ establishes His Deity and vindicates the apostolic witness. It does all this because it does more—it comes as a religious absolute, the direct experience of the action of God in its most intense form. It remakes us at our moral centre, and nothing can either be more real or more really known than that.

II. Religion and Theology

So far is the creative principle of the Christian religion from being indifferent to theology that it is nearer the truth to say that the impulse towards system and wholeness of outlook and thought is its most characteristic mark. Certainly that is the case as soon as the first Christians are able to take account of the transforming experience granted to them by the knowledge of the Resurrection. The deep certainties which are at the foundations of their religious confidence become the constructive elements in the primitive theology. In the Johannine circle, and in portions of the writings of St. Paul, the theoretic interest is most marked. The wider bearings of the Christian revelation are progressively wrought out and the insights thus gained still control the Christian mind. The same impulse towards completeness of view will never be long absent when the significance for thought of the Christian facts and life is at all adequately grasped. That which truly awakens the soul awakens it in unity and in its every faculty, awakening thought along with feeling and will and calling forth the 'intellectual love of God.' It is only by a departure from the Christian standpoint

that distrust of reason and neglect of theory have ever come about.

There are, however, those who seek to justify a severance between 'heart' and 'mind.' We find in philosophy those who try to use the characteristic intuitions emphasised by, e.g., Bergson as means for undervaluing the pure intellect. We have in the school of Ritschl in theology a similar attempt to dissociate religion from theory. Both these attitudes work out disastrously for theology, and eventually for religion. The scope of mind becomes restricted. The sway of reason is unfairly narrowed, and religion itself is left to be the prey of fancy and impulse. The instinct for continuity and coherence is the right of every reasonable being, and no enlightened mind can ever really wish to miss truth. There can be little doubt that the mistrust of the intellect, of which Ritschlianism has been a great illustration, is at the root of our present-day lack of system and method in theology and of the prevailing religious triviality and impressionism. "No modest and sane student would seek to minimise the debt we owe to the great Biblical scholars of the past fifty years, but it is nevertheless true that the impulse given to critical investigation by the great pioneers has, for lack of a correspondingly fruitful impulse in the field of systematic and constructive theology, gone to produce a generation of *petits-maîtres* of critical detail, whose work lacks spirit and insight and must be classed as a symptom of decadence. It is significant that Germany has produced no great constructive theological force (with the exception of Ritschl himself) since Dorner and Rothe, both of whom were imbued with

the spirit of the Greek theology." [1] The revival of speculative Christian thought is one of the great needs of the present day, for on it depends the revival of reasoned conviction among the better educated and among the people generally. The moral and religious view of experience which Christianity involves covers and is decisive for the whole range of thought and being in all their highest relations. It must be so unless you detract from the actual wealth of the Christian sources and subject-matter. Its final bearings concern reality, truth and destiny. The Christian religion is the actual means of solution of the great practical problem of ethics, and its theology is built on the same far-reaching lines. That theology is not an unrelated collection of fragmentary notions: it is a definite and coherent system of truth about God and about the soul and the universe. If our contemporary constructive thought could reach to the height of the cosmic Christology of St. Paul and to the wide speculative grasp of the Johannine theology, it would both do justice to the great philosophical competence of our religion, and also reveal the thoughts of many hearts. In regard to this matter we may well bring once again to our minds Canon Scott Holland's penetrating warning and regret: "We have lost much of that rich splendour, that large-hearted fulness of power which characterises the great Greek masters of theology. We have suffered our faith for so long to accept the pinched and narrow limits of a most unapostolic divinity that we can hardly persuade people to recall

[1] E. Herman, *The Meaning and Value of Mysticism*, p. 295. (This should be qualified by mention of a great name—that of the late E. Troeltsch.)

how wide was the sweep of Christian thought in the first centuries, how largely it dealt with those deep problems of spiritual existence and development which now once more impress upon us the seriousness of the issues amid which our souls are travailing. We have let people forget all our creed has to say about the unity of all creation, or about the evolution of history, or about the universality of the divine action through the Word. We have lost the power of wielding the mighty language with which Athanasius expands the significance of creation and regeneration, of incarnation, and sacrifice, and redemption, and salvation, and glory." [1]

III. Truth and Validity

When we speak of the truth of any religion we mean a great deal more than the bare historicity of the facts which are at its base. Truth in this connection is inseparable from significance, from power for life, from capacity to answer our ultimate questions. Truth and validity stand or fall together.

I have sought to show that there are no logical grounds for excluding the possibility of finding in history special data calculated to shed light upon our final problems. Further, I have sought to show that what is thus possible is actually the case.

It is by no means an accident that the undervaluing of Christianity proceeds by way of a disparagement of history in general and of the historical features of Christianity in particular. At the present time, especially, the notion of historical relativism is at the root of all serious attacks upon Christian belief. The

[1] Scott Holland, *Logic and Life*, p. 8.

disparagement of history leads us eventually to the reduction of Christianity to a mere system of ideas, or else to that restricted notion of validity 'for us,' which is an abandonment of genuine and absolute validity.

The possibility of vindicating the finality and absolute worth of the Christian religion rests upon appreciation of the fact that in Christianity alone we have an effective solution, owing to the place of Christ in Christianity, of the *universal* problem of religion. Whenever religious thought fails to grasp the general and universal conditions of the gaining of true self-hood, in spiritual dependence upon God, it is, on that account, precluded from a complete appreciation of the distinctive contribution made by Christianity to life and thought.

Two recent books vividly illustrate the decisive place of the universal problem of religion for ultimate and decisive positions in the philosophy of religion. I refer to Troeltsch's *Christian Thought* and to A. Schweitzer's *Christianity and the Religions of the World.* Troeltsch ascribes a merely relative validity to Christianity—a validity 'for us,' though he still, somewhat inconsistently, I feel bound to think, seems to grant that the missionary enterprise of Christianity has, even on such lines, a certain justification. Schweitzer, however, gains a more thorough-going appreciation of the universal message and appeal of Christianity—simply, I think, because he relates the function of Christianity to the soul's universal problem. Both these writers stress the historical factor and regard the religious task as that of providing a means of overcoming the contrast between that impression

which is ' derived from Nature ' [1] and that knowledge of God ' which can only arise from immediate impression and personal conviction.' [2]

The source of Troeltsch's limitation of the range of the Christian message appears to be, at least in part, his conception of a ' polymorphous ' truth, an excessive individualism and a distrust of ' intellectualism ' which is shared also, to a certain extent, by Schweitzer.

Over against any failure to appreciate the universal problem of personality in the conditions of its conflict and victory and over against this extreme individualism and distrust of thought's concepts I would set that solution of the problem which I have endeavoured to establish in this book. The finality, the universality, the genuine absolute worth, of Christianity rests upon that solution of the problem of genuine self-affirmation in response to the saving initiative of God which, apart from Christianity, abides as the permanent need of the soul.

When Schweitzer describes Christianity as ' an ethic of deed ' which ' apprehends God as a Will that is distinct from the world and compels us not to conform to the world,' he is giving expression to those features in Christianity which are at the root of its supreme value. If we, further, appreciate the contrast between all ' natural ' or sub-human values and the values of the life of the spirit in itself, then we are prepared to find in the religion of divine saving action the ultimate revelation of God. A religious view of God and the world rests upon recognition of the conflict of values of which I have made reference, and the absolute

[1] A. Schweitzer, *Christianity and the Religions of the World*, p. 76.
[2] E. Troeltsch, *Christian Thought*, p. 16.

religion must be acknowledged to be the religion of invasive, redemptive Deed.

* * * * * *

We cannot hope to find God by merely looking for Him 'in nature,' for we cannot even find ourselves completely there. We are 'natural-supernatural' or 'finite-infinite' creatures, and God comes to meet us out of life in history. In, with, and under the historic we find the superhistoric and the real. The simplest statement of the problem of religion, the problem of gaining transcendence over the state of being a 'thing,' implies the redeeming activity of God. He is Himself the pre-condition of our attainment and response and the emancipatory environment of the soul. Out of history—supremely in that effective concentration of His action, the saving Deed which 'He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead'—we gain contact with God, find Him revealing Himself through action. Christianity is the universal religion because it fulfils the conditions of the solution of every man's spiritual problem.

Christian theology is the legitimate counterpart of this practical solution. The historic redeeming Act of the Cross is the final vindication of the moral meaning of the individual and of the race. The problems which are the final problems of the moral consciousness are also the final problems for the reason. Thus the knowledge brought to us by the Deed of God, awakening in us a morality and spirituality of deed, provides the decisive material for our knowledge of God in Himself.

The problems which are the final problems of the moral consciousness are also the final problems for

the Reason. In the Cross we are made aware of the consummation of an act of self-sacrifice on the part of God. The Intending Will goes forth to self-expression, and gains it actively in the work of Christ. The meaning of Creation gets final manifestation in the redeeming deed, and the experience of redemption gives to us the point of view from which we may see the meaning of the cosmic process. Thereby we see creation, in intention and in end, included within redemptive activity and purpose. We make our own St. Paul's magnificent intuition : " The Creation itself shall be redeemed from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." Sometimes it may appear to some as though they were thinking new thoughts, but, if there is much in them, it will quite readily be seen to be a fact that St. Paul or St. John, or Origen, or St. Augustine were beforehand with them. There will always be theology in religion and metaphysic in theology because the action of God brings revelation, and what He does becomes the great subject-matter for our constructive enterprise.

Grasping the salient features in a genuine inventory of the contents of the spiritual life, we shall see that a religion which claims universal validity must stress the following points : Action of God, Revelation through Action, Personality in God, the supramundane Kingdom. Christianity stresses all these, and when it is presented mainly on the lines of a doctrine of sheer Immanence it stultifies itself and fails to bring out its own real contribution to the knowledge of the soul and of God. The key to a grasp of Christian doctrine lies in the work even more than in the teaching of Jesus. Soteriology is the beginning of wisdom in

theology and controls its whole development. The Christian doctrines of the Deity of Christ and of the Godhead as Trinity in Unity are the direct outcome of a sound moral and religious valuation of the Deed of God in Christ, and are in truth the theoretic implications of that action.

The differentia of Christianity, the facts and truths which are its own property, are the concepts which avail most for its own theoretic presentation and for the answer of our great moral and intellectual questions. Reason and Revelation meet in the conception of the highest good, and Christianity possesses the material which assures us 'these things shall be.'

When we ask the deep questions that the human soul has always put to itself in the face of disaster, loss, bereavement, whence comes both our scandal at these facts and the persistence of our belief that love and hope and faith are the best, the greatest, the outlasting, things? Is not the answer that we trust our scientific postulate, the reasonableness of the universe? It is our source of confidence, and it means belief in God. But there is a fear which goes deeper than anything arising from outward things. Nature is often kindly and beautiful, but 'she has no hands.' Immanence is not enough. "Verily Thou art a God that hidest Thyself, Thou God of Israel." At such times, at the crucial times, the word that comes through the invasive action of grace is the only word which will at all avail.

"It is not Judaism, not Christianity, not any kind of Theism that bids us, or even allows us, to hold and to accept as good in themselves the severe painful or cruel or wrong things that happen in this our com-

plicated, difficult life. None of these convictions worship Nature, or the World as a whole ; they all, on the contrary, find much that is wrong in Nature as we know it, and in the World as a whole as we actually find it. All such believers worship and adore not Nature, but God—the love and the action of God within and from behind the world, but not as though this love and action were everywhere equally evident, not as though they directly willed, directly chose, all things that happen and as they happen." [1]

Now when we take account of the limitations of a purely ' natural ' theology and add to the sum of the difficulties enumerated in the above quotation those created by the presence of moral evil and of sin, where indeed should we look for manifestations which will reduce the pressure of these problems save in history ? Further, if we consider the real implications of the divine immanence we shall see that these mean finally the Incarnation. The action which is made inwardly effective must come through a personal life, and it must be here in our midst. Yet it is quite meaningless to speak of an Incarnation which does not mean God present by means of one human individual. There is no union of God with man in an ' impersonal humanity.' That is far too general. It lacks point, concentration, emphasis. It could not mean true incarnation because ' humanity in general ' is only an idea and never a fact. Yet, recognising this truth in general terms, we must not think that the incarnate Person could, manifesting Himself in a precise locality and at a definite time, fail to be marked with certain special characteristics of the then contemporary age.

[1] F. Von Hügel, *Essays and Addresses*, p. 115.

Though wholly grounded in and moved by the Will of Him that sent Him and perfectly knowing that mind and will and acting in view of them, He would still be conditioned, in external aspects, by the peculiar characteristics of his time. Otherwise His contemporaries could not have found Him intelligible, nor could He be regarded as genuinely one of the human race. Not only may the Eternal enter time, the Infinite also may have positive access to our spatial conditions. If so this is indeed the act of God's self-reduction, on one side of His being, and the limitations imposed by time and locality are only the indications of the fact. This, for practical purposes, means, merely, that though gifted with absolute spiritual insight, that insight, even in Christ, must impress itself in a certain restricted content. The Incarnation prepares the way for the work of the Spirit. " When He —the Spirit of Truth—is come, He shall guide you into all truth, for He shall take of Mine and show it unto you." The alternative to this frank recognition of the conditions of the Incarnate life are simply an unethical conception of the Godhead. The complete self-assertion of God is this, His complete manifestation of Himself as Holy Love. Omnipotence, Infinitude, Absoluteness, are what they are by reason of Him Who is and is Love. The incarnation, the self-reduction, the Cross, these ways are not shut off from Him, but the means whereby His genuine infinitude in Love not only is manifested, but also achieves His ends.

> " For supreme Spirit subject was to clay,
> And Law from its own servants learned a law,
> And Light besought a lamp unto its way,
> And Awe was reined in awe

At one small house of Nazareth ;
And Golgotha
Saw Breath to breathlessness resign its breath,
And Life do homage for its crown to death."[1]

Just as for a sound estimate of the demands of ethical theory the vindication of moral values realised in persons requires immortality and the transcendental Kingdom of God, so also the problem of evil points in the same direction. There are some who take refuge, when confronted with these difficulties, in the idea of a finite God, a God limited either in intelligence or in benevolence or probably in both. Sometimes He is represented as 'a young God'—I suppose really existing, but on the way. Such an existence would not properly be God at all. There would still be in the background the necessary nature of things which would not be penetrated by Him nor owe its existence to Him, but which would remain the thing in itself for which He is not responsible, and, perhaps, could never control. He would not be the 'Supreme Being,' and, therefore, would not be either the supreme object of our spiritual quest nor of our constructive thought. If all we could say of God is that He is 'finite,' it is quite certain that such a being could not meet the demands of the religious consciousness. Religion itself would not long survive the discovery. From the scientific standpoint such an idea is a breach of the axiom of system and wholeness. From the philosophical standpoint it is guilty of the cardinal error of not finding in the 'is' the ground of the necessary and also of the contingent. It is Being which determines what must be, and not the other way round.

[1] Francis Thompson, *Selected Poems*, p. 28.

Perhaps the real root of this mistaken notion is in the desire to relieve God of the responsibility for the evil in the world. This it is willing to do at the cost of depriving Him of all that genuinely constitutes divinity. But the repudiation of this finitude notion brings the facts of evil within the scope of the intention and purposes of God. We might say there they may well be left. And this is so if you mean that our thought must still be allowed to deal with the problem and to seek a solution. There is no solution through either a legalistic moralism or a mere reference to 'the freedom of the will.' There is no freedom of the will which does not imply a still vaster determination, and no light on this question apart from the concepts of grace, love, and sacrifice. Still, if we grant immortality, and the actual energising of the powers of redemption both 'here' and 'yonder,' we may grasp the beginnings of a solution. We cannot, it well may be, know this solution as a fact, whereof we have experience, but for faith and in hope we may see the light which discovers it. There may be a good which, so far as we can see, could never have been attained, apart from both the possibility and actuality of evil. If that be so, it will lead us to a deeper appreciation of the words: "To whom much is forgiven, the same loveth much." In any case, the tremendous question demands our reverent attention, and if put away from us for a time will come back again into the mind. There is never any room for that antinomian attitude which might say "Let us do evil that good may come," for only by the casting away of, and by the victory over, sin can good ever be received. Still, when all is said, nothing is gained by saying that it might have

been well if human persons had been reduced to the level of automata. Nor need anyone fail to appreciate the truth there is in the thought that evil and sin exist that they may be overcome, transcended, and made through vicarious sacrifice and love the occasions for deeper spiritual response and life and gladness. At least such a thought can never be far away from the Christian consciousness which can appreciate the image of 'the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,' and can enter into the meaning of the words of certain popular hymns (allowing for figurative poetical phrase, which in this case teach better theology than do most hymns), which tell us how 'in Him the tribes of Adam boast *more* blessings than their father lost.' Is there not also another hymn which still more nearly approaches the idea at which we are hinting:

> "'Ere He raised the lofty mountains
> Formed the earth or raised the sky,
> Love, eternal, free and boundless,
> Gave the Son of God to die,
> Foreordained the Prince of princes,
> To the Cross of Calvary."

The consideration that evil and sin may actually prove instrumental means for the higher type of good can never be ruled out of consideration so long as the above remain characteristic utterances of Christian piety, and it is a view which philosophy, in its doctrine of the dialectic (affirmation through negation) has always allowed and often required. Of course so long as an individualistic, *quid pro quo*, type of ethic is maintained the above consideration cannot be entertained, neither could the idea of atonement

nor of the forgiveness of sins. If, however, we acknowledge the Church as the organised fellowship of redemptive humanity and substitute for the 'claim and counter-claim' morality a genuine ethic of 'spiritual membership,' the probabilities of redemption need not be held to be less than the willingness and powers of love. That both the ethical progress of humanity and the future prospects of Christianity turn upon a deep appreciation of these considerations does not admit of substantial doubt. It is always possible for the safe and self-contented to say that 'no man may deliver his brother,' but so to speak is to deny Christianity's apology-in-chief and certainly to forget both what the Cross teaches and what love would have us do.

Philosophical motives compel us, when we take account, by the principle of degrees of value, of ethical and religious facts, to attribute personality to the Absolute, and religious motives compel us, when we arrive at that stage of insight which brings the decisive facts into view, to consider the personal God as absolute. Under the sway of these rational and spiritual motives and using the decisive Christian data, Christian theology completes the vast edifice of the philosophical knowledge of God by means of the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity. From the work of Christ (of which we have given the leading features in relation to the essential lines of a philosophy of the spiritual life) it finds Him actively revealed as God with God. From the knowledge of God with God in Spirit it gains the idea which gives rational content to the thought of God as having love 'in Himself.'

The motives which lead to this idea of God are both

religious and theoretic (intellectual). The equation of God with the Absolute cannot be abandoned by monotheism. Equally the acknowledgment of the divine work of Christ cannot be denied by the Christian soul. Also the actual distinction within in the Unity of the personal Spirit cannot be overlooked if an account is to be given of the real implications of the life of God within the soul. The use of the term 'person' to describe the three different modes of existence is required to do justice to the livingness of the communion experience. The idea of the Godhead covers the unity which monotheism requires. The doctrine of the Trinity is the conservation of monotheism without the omission of the integral factors in the totality of the religious experiences.

The worship which is of the essence of the religious attitude, and which is itself a divinely created response, does not fall outside of that life and activity which is in the Absolute. The Spirit known and actively present in the devotion and response of the soul to the Father known in the Son is itself an essential fact in the life of love which constitutes the inner experience and being of the Godhead. Thus Christian theology overcomes pantheism by seeing the one God to be equal to all the variety and intensity of genuine life. Equally Christian theology, by means of the doctrine of the Trinity, overcomes any view which neglects to regard God as absolute, self-sufficient, and unlimited from without. The personal Spirit has His place within 'the fontal life of Godhead.' Such a recognition means, and it alone safeguards, that the divine life has all the conditions of its movement within itself, and that as such it is both experienced and

known by the soul in a union which, by being brought about by love, implies distinction for unity's sake. The doctrine itself, when formed, expresses all that Christian devotion requires for the unfolding of its ultimate meaning. It grows out of recognition of all that is implied in the fact that in history, and by the act of God, redemption has been accomplished and continually goes forward. The God Who has revealed Himself is the true God and has truly made Himself known. The value of the doctrine may be appreciated from the religious standpoint—the soul has to do with a known God as He is in Himself. Or it may be appreciated from the intellectual standpoint as the solution of the problem of the One and the many while guided by the determining historical, speculative, and religious data. The idea of God which is brought to us by the saving Act and revealing Word of Christ is one in which both heart and mind may rest. If you divide the substance you break with the scientific principle of totality. If you 'confound the Persons' you break with the principle of adequacy and comprehensiveness and neglect both history and the testimony of the Christian soul.

To a certain extent, the theistic Idealism which modern knowledge vindicates is already a Christian Idealism. It is so in all the deeper implications, and in those factors within it which seek their completion by means of the special Christian data and insights. It is an Idealism which finds the universe 'friendly,' not because it will sink down to naturalism, but because it provides opportunity and scope for the soul. It reaches forward, in the writings of some of its chief exponents, to the thought of God as 'the

Eternal Redeemer.' If it somewhat haltingly stresses the Divine Personality this is largely a mere reaction from an earlier Deism which neglected the scope of the Divine Immanence. In its own genuine reverence it possesses an attitude which logically implies recognition of transcendence and personality in God. Some of the best examples of contemporary theistic literature, such as the writings of Pringle-Pattison, W. R. Sorley, and Sir Henry Jones, if supplemented by careful study of the history of Israel and of the Apostolic Age, would form an excellent introduction to the study of the witness of the historical religions. It is as the consummation of such insights that we have been led by our enquiry to regard the philosophy of Christianity. So doing, we justify our belief in the universal message of the Christian religion and find in it that which comes 'not to destroy, but to fulfil.'

When we get that mistaken severance between the value-judgment and the judgment regarding fact and existence, where there is failure to see that, in all ultimate questions, valuation implies metaphysics, injustice is done both to the demands of Reason and also to the actual facts and experiences which are at the foundations of a really adequate Christian philosophy. Often these mistakes rest upon an incomplete survey of the actual material of Christian knowledge, which includes not only, for example, the fact of the Resurrection, but also that recognition of Christ as the Object of worship which is given in the soul's devotion to a redeeming Lord present to the soul in His personal work now, 'as living Spirit upon living spirit.' Also the Christian theology does not reach

its goal through a mere analysis of the Christian experience, but, like all genuine thought, it works out all that the experience implies and has to do with the God Whom the experience reveals. The case is similar regarding the apocalyptic element in the Gospels. This element, which appears in the New Testament, is not completely estimated unless we see what Christ Himself made of it and what it becomes in the wider setting of the Resurrection and of the outpouring of the Spirit. Its features as disclosed in the Gospels are the transient manifestations of the eternal truth of Christianity as the actual energising of redemption from 'this world': its essential meaning for thought is the constant saving action of God, the manifestation of the truth that He is really 'Master of the Universe,' in Himself, transcendent over it. Then He is made known to be able to satisfy the need of the soul for 'victory over the world' and to bring the soul to its full attainment in the supramundane Kingdom of God. In this relation also genuine religious interests are at stake in the conclusions of theology, and a really satisfactory system of thought is a requisite for an adequate attitude of life. Christ is known as the saving Person in virtue of both history and experience, and He is the one Christ in these two relations. What He is 'worth' for the soul rests upon what He is, for it reveals His place in reality. History and metaphysical truth must always have their place in Christology, if that is to do justice to the Christian certainties.

If we have got beyond the merely intellectualistic estimate of the soul and have seen (as we must see by every rational consideration) that the inner wealth of

the self includes, in the unity of a personal life, feeling and will along with thought, a test of the adequacy of our idea of God will lie in its capacity to satisfy the 'heart' as well as the 'head.' We are members of a universe, and in a universe where Reality appears and where the main tendencies of the soul can in no wise be put to confusion, our final ideas must meet the real and permanent needs of the soul. This is not to make our transient desires dictate terms to what is objectively true and real: it is merely to carry out to its completion what our axioms of the 'rationality' of the real, and of the knowledge of Reality through its appearance, rightly graduated must always signify and demand. Therefore we include within our test of adequacy the capacity of the theory to do justice to the permanent interests of the devout soul. To use such a test is to give full scope to the tests of comprehensiveness conjoined with system and proportion.

The great theological affirmations regarding the essential Being of God, implied in the Creeds, and stated in the great works of the Alexandrian theologians —affirmations which still constitute the core of an adequate system of Christian thought—conserve great humanistic values. There is a satisfaction both for heart and mind given in the Christian central doctrines which we look for in vain elsewhere. We have argued about them on the ground of their truth, their firm historical grounds, the way they meet reason's deepest demands, but, when we come to a final synthesis, *their capacity to reach us at our moral and spiritual centre* is a great collateral proof of their adequacy and reality. They provide us with an object of worship

equal to the heart's devotion, calculated to call it forth. In comparison with the religious worth of the Trinitarian concepts, those of a less developed and abstract monotheism, disregardful of the lessons of Christian history, are thin and cold. Even those whose training and intellectual preference are away from the historic theology of Christendom have often acknowledged this devotional and religious pre-eminence. Martineau gives expression to this feeling in some words which are a striking testimony to the spiritual wealth of the traditional theology in all its really central emphasis and contents: "In devotional literature and religious thought I find nothing of ours [i.e. of the Unitarian type of theory] that does not pale before Augustine, Tauler, and Pascal. And in the poetry of the Church it is the Latin or the German hymns, or the lines of Charles Wesley or of Keble, that fasten on my memory and heart and make all else seem poor and cold. I cannot help this. I can only say I am sure it is no perversity; and I believe that the preference is founded in reason and nature." [1] There is no justification in laying all the stress of our argument regarding the Trinitarian conceptions on their ability to satisfy devotional and definitely religious demands, but it is highly important to notice that these concepts, gained on the definitely historical and intellectual grounds of the Christian facts and by the pressure of logic dealing with these facts, have this quite unique significance for devotion. My contention is that it is part of their great synthesis value, as necessary theories for the full interpretation of the Christian data, that they should possess also

[1] Martineau, *Essays*, ii, p. 375.

this satisfactoriness for purely religious feeling and desire. One great lesson of scientific theism is "that God is a necessity of human nature: which means, not only that in Him this natural spiritual want finds satisfaction, but, further, that it never could have arisen apart from Him as objectively existent."[1] Apply that lesson, and it is clear that the view of God which most fully meets the demands of all aspects of our personality has about it most of adequacy, i.e. of '*trueness and reality*.'

It would, however, be a complete misunderstanding of the actual nature of Christianity and of the grounds of Christian certainty if it were considered that either the Christian estimate of Christ or the body of truths required to do justice to that estimate (a body of truths gathered up in the system of Christian theology) stands or falls with the above-stated intellectual and emotional tests. *The Christian certainty resides in that actual penetration of the soul by Christ which is itself the moral absolute acting in the most effectual sense.* It does not look beyond itself either for its sources or its rationale. There is a point where the historic and the spiritual meet and become one. The human experience of God, in His redemptive action, is decisive both for faith and for theology. History becomes present, for it is inlived, and history becomes the external vehicle of the super-historic Son of God.

Redemptive action upon the soul is the essential thing demanded by the soul itself in the conditions of its genuine self-realisation. Such self-realisation must be the attainment of the divine intention regard-

[1] W. L. Davidson, *Recent Theistic Discussion*, p. 29.

ing the soul and on account of our deep implication in lower nature (as distinct from that Higher Natural which is Spiritual) such self-realisation must be gained through response to the saving initiative of God. Such self-realisation goes forward, through the negative movement, the death to the self regarded in its isolation from the mind of the Spirit, towards that genuine finding of the self 'unto life eternal' which contact with God, in His redeeming power, alone can confer.

Only out of history could the influences come which thus carry the soul to its goal. At one point all these influences are concentrated and made effectual. The Deed of Christ is the effectual working of Redemption, the crown of the constant operation of God in grace.

Redemptive action means revelation. The supremely effective deed reveals supremely. The deed declares the Person working the effect. Constantly effected it makes Him known after the power of an endless life. It brings before us all the motives which lead to Christology: all the motives which have produced the doctrine of the Person of Christ which has become the possession of Christendom.

If we see in the work of Christ the actual energising of redemption from this world, and the means of forgiveness and new life, it will not be difficult to see what was really at stake in the Arian and Sabellian controversies. The heart of the contention made by Athanasius was that God Himself was active there in the divine work of redemption, that He was personally present doing the work, that He had not delegated the work to a creature. In its meeting with Christ, the Redeemer, the soul had met with its saving God. The affirmation of the Divine Sonship

of Christ was the vindication of the reality of the Christian's experience of God, in a mode distinct from the experience of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Retaining the distinctively Christian sense of indebtedness to Christ, our answers to the questions involved in those controversies must have been the same as those for which Athanasius made his successful stand. And to-day, retaining the Christian standpoint, our restatement must re-express the same convictions and insights in our contemporary modes of speech.

The motive which led to the formation of the doctrine of the Trinity must always, granted the same characteristically Christian grounds and experience, continually vindicate that doctrine in its full and ontological significance. Beyond all possibility of controversy it is Reality which the soul seeks both to know and to experience. It is with the one God Himself that the soul has to do, and Him it seeks. If we are to know Him as completely as is possible, it must be by bringing out the final significance for our thought of the historical data and the continuous experience which are the media of His revelation of Himself through His saving action. The doctrine of the Trinity, in its full ontological reference, *affirms that the Reality does truly appear.* By means of the historical manifestation, spiritually penetrated into its deeper and super-historic ground, He is, *as He is in Himself,* truly made known. Our choice here is not (as those who follow a curiously inconsistent cult of 'simplicity' may urge) a choice between simple faith and doubtful metaphysics. It is a choice between an inchoate faith unaware of its own essential meaning and the ascription of a full and rich life to

the God Who is really made known. The notion of historical relativity is broken in virtue of the soul's historic redemption. We gain unity and systematic coherence in our Christian thought when we bring creation into line with redemption. We begin to gain this insight when we see that the historic redemption was 'no after-thought,' but that, as St. Paul grasped, 'creation also shall be redeemed': we reach the top of this insight when we see how the creative Spirit has place within the unity of the Godhead. A consistent world-view gained on a Christian base—a view enabling us to see creation in redemptive light—requires that actual idea of God which has become Christianity's heritage.

This idea has been reached from the historical basis of Christianity conjoined with the testimony of its own characteristic experience. Apart from that dual basis, a basis which yet is one in its dependence upon the saving Person, this idea of God would not have taken this form, nor can it be successfully maintained if either factor in the basis is assumed to be withdrawn. Once gained, however, the value of the basis is demonstrated by the value of the conception thus made available. Nowhere else do we get a conception of God which so adequately covers the demands of the heart and mind. By all tests of adequacy and comprehensiveness the Christian idea of God makes a unique contribution to our systematic knowledge. It is the legitimate and direct consummation of theistic Idealism, and in the strength of its distinctive contributions it safeguards many permanent human interests and intuitions which, apart from it, get small consideration. Any serious departure from the Chris-

tian doctrine of God covers a serious neglect of some deep humanistic interest. It preserves the unity of the Godhead, while at the same time, by refusing to 'divide the Person,' it affirms the inner wealth and living quality of the real Being. By its doctrine of the Word 'made flesh' it vindicates the truth of history's lessons and the truth of 'appearance.' By its doctrine of the Spirit 'proceeding from the Father and the Son,' it affirms that God really does dwell with the holy and humble soul and carries the response of love from within the soul back to its Source as an aspect of the life of God in its continual movement. It gives us a God sufficient for the devotion and worship of the actual living, passionate creatures who 'are also His offspring.' So far from representing the triumph of the Greek spirit over the simple essence of the Gospel, the Christian doctrine of the Trinity is the means whereby the Gospel occupies in the realm of thought that place which it holds for life and for experience. Small wonder that we should call those data which call forth such a theory the most significant and decisive for a philosophical theism, since only by such a theory can we, while retaining all speculative interests, do justice both to history and to God within the soul. Strictly controlled by the actual revealing sources in history, it affirms a rich inner wealth of being in the Godhead while negating an indefinite complexity. The alternative is some form of harking back to an undifferentiated and unknowable Absolute, negating and absorbing all the meanings which life and history actually cause us to know.

Assuming the truth of the testimony of those who have gained fellowship with God, granting that the

soul reaches its term in a life hidden in 'the deep abyss of the Godhead,' the doctrine of the Trinity gives us the metaphysical ground of both activity and repose for the soul in its fruition. That the same concept sustains and is required to explain the present deeper significance of 'union with God' in this present life is really only part of the same insight. We cannot dwell upon the great mystical utterances in relation to this topic, though the confirmation brought to the Christian idea of God by mysticism could only be denied by those who fail to allow the genuineness of the mystic's first-hand knowledge of the ultimate realities. St. Augustine and Eckart not only find in the doctrines of the Incarnation and the Trinity the final answer to the riddle of the universe, but also the necessary form of expression of the deeper meaning of the hidden life of the soul. Ruysbroeck, one of the greatest of the philosophical mystics, leads us back by way of the Trinitarian doctrine to the heart of Reality, the eternal and abysmal Fountain of life-giving life.[1]

We have a moral and religious interest and stake in the doctrine of the Incarnation of the Son of God, and the metaphysical and ontological doctrine conserves the moral and religious interest. Great religious values are conserved by the details of the Gospel history. We stand in need of a divine Helper, and in the Incarnation, with the Cross as its climax, we see self-abnegatory Love at the very heart of Being. There is the manifestation in time of the essential

[1] John of Ruysbroeck, *The Adornment of the Spiritual Marriage*, p. 21, Edited, with an introduction, by Evelyn Underhill (J. M. Dent).

character of the finally real Being. The Fatherhood of God is seen to be eternal and intrinsic when the Sonship is seen to be eternal and intrinsic within the Godhead. Religion has a supreme interest in such knowledge, and the Trinitarian doctrine affirms it on grounds of reason operating with the distinctively Christian facts.

"What we have to deal with is the continuous manifestation of a single Power whose full nature can only be learned from the source of the process as a whole, *and most fully from its final stages.*" I quoted this passage from Dr. Pringle-Pattison's *Idea of God* earlier in this book, and I do so again to mark the connection between this latter part of my work and that which went before. No mistake could be greater than that of thinking we could dispense with the preliminary study of the rational grounds and main features of belief in God. It is concerning the Power 'everywhere revealed through phenomena,' in Herbert Spencer's words, that we make the great affirmations involved in the Christian conception of God. We carry out consistently the idea involved in Dr. Pringle-Pattison's words just quoted, and state the idea of God in the strength of the final and most significant stage. *There is no logical break between our initial study of the main lessons of modern thought and the establishment of the truth of Christian thought.*

By simply applying consistently the method of interpretation of the 'lower' by the 'higher,' and by applying a sound scale of concepts, we have gained, in Christian philosophy, the inclusive system of ideas—not as a burden upon the philosophic mind, but in 'spirit and in truth.'

The most important items in an account of the main results of modern enquiry into ' truth and reality ' (to use the title of one of Mr. Bradley's volumes) seem to me to be the following :

(1) The steady rise of recognition and enforcement of concepts which transcend Materialism.

(2) The provision by means of criticism of materialistic ideas and by means of speculative constructions on a ' spiritualistic ' base—witness the work of Bergson, Le Roy, Merz, Eucken, and others—of important data for a synthesis.

(3) The actual enterprise of construction on the newly acquired bases by means of ' degrees of value,' ' scale of concepts,' ' wholeness,' and comprehensiveness.

I conceive, further, that the critical application of the method indicated in (3) leads on to the ethical ground, and thence by an inward logical necessity on to the religious ground, and finally on to historical ground.

Once on historical ground and grasping firmly all that the idea of human ' personality ' involves and requires, we can find no halting-place short of the Christian concepts based on the Christian data. This valuation of the philosophy of Christianity is not, however, merely an exercise of the ' value-judgment of religion.' The Christian ideas give us a Theism which holds all the insights of Theism as a ' concentration point ' and as a consummation in virtue of Christianity's own contribution. Especially does the Christian idea of God conserve great humanistic values and in a way unapproached elsewhere prove its comprehensiveness, i.e. inclusive of all the permanent insights regarding the value of the finite self and also regarding the Source and Ground of all appearance. Modern thought

justifies an idealistic Theism, and Christian theology is the full statement of what that Theism must include.

The above paragraph sets forth the leading results of our enquiry and of the elementary synthesis based on that enquiry. If we look ' steadily and whole ' at the contemporary lessons modern thought will give us a convincing and verifiable idea of God. It may do more ; if we take it its full compass and preserve ourselves from certain merely conventional limitations of outlook, it may be ' our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ.'

It is sometimes said, even by those who recognise the revival of anti-materialistic concepts in contemporary thought, that though the set of the current is away from Naturalism, it can hardly be said to be definitely, as yet, turned towards Christian positions. I think that such a view loses sight of many indications of the real drift of the work of the greater thinkers of recent times. It loses sight, for instance, of the insistence upon ' personality ' in the writings of John Theodore Merz and in Eucken. It misses the importance of the stress upon ' soul-formation ' in Bosanquet, and upon ' the beloved community ' and ' salvation ' in Royce. It misses Sorley's emphasis upon the significance of the ' person ' as the ' bearer ' of values and Pringle-Pattison's estimate of the place of ' redemptive love ' in the idea of God. If the actual development of essentially Christian ideas is but slight it is because of the conventional exclusion of the lessons of history. Christian philosophers can supply that which will amend that defect. So doing, they can show Christianity as the legitimate heir of the best contemporary insights.

We have presented the Christian religion as the

essential form of religion and its data and constructs as the material which enables us to gain a coherent world-view. Thus we are enabled to estimate aright the religious worth and scientific truth of Christianity and to see its theology as the actual final form of the world's knowledge of God. The sense of wholeness, of systematic coherence, must grip us here. We view the large bearings of the Christian system of thought, while at the same time it includes, without explaining them away, all the permanent values and truths. It does this in the way suitable for a theology, with a large practical appeal and no sort of reluctance to allow that 'we know in part' after all and that philosophy's task is never done. In principle, the central issues have been grasped both in philosophy and in theology, details of expression but mean that there is bound to be much that is symbolic and merely approximate in all human knowledge and that there is always 'a more excellent way.'

Christianity is 'final,' i.e. brings to us a knowledge of ultimate reality—on account of the place of Christ in it. It is *final in the field of the spiritual life* because in Him we experience in our own spiritual centre the power which creates and preserves the life of the soul. Nothing contains more certainly the features of finality than that which is absolute for the moral and spiritual life.

Christianity is 'final,' because it brings to us a knowledge of God as He is in Himself. Through the work of Christ we are made to know the *character* of God. Nothing can be more certainly known regarding Personality. That is the first and last knowledge about God—finality in this connection could mean neither more nor less.

Christianity reflects in its theological system that finality which inheres in its knowledge of God in Christ. The measure of finality which belongs to any system of thought must be consistent with our actual finitude. Not by being 'static' but by a capacity of constant re-expression the truth makes itself clear to every age. Part of the adequacy of Christian theology consists in the grasp of the truth that its knowledge is 'in spirit and in truth' and not of 'the letter that killeth.' Restatement, both in philosophy and in theology, is the means of conservation of their final and absolute content. It is the way in which truth is shown to be our contemporary.

Restatement, then, is not a thing of 'shreds and patches.' It has a grammar. It has its own scientific method and its own structural principles. It is no new thing, though at the present time it has a good deal of headway to make up.

One great thing about the restatement of Christianity is that *there is something to restate.* There is a permanent element in Christianity. We have sought to discover its main outlines, for these should be our test of the suitability of any constructive effort.

Relatively, and in principle, the work of the statement of Christianity is already done. If we have grasped the motives which led to the formation of the theology of Nicæa and of Chalcedon we have seen that they are permanently Christian motives. Neither in their history nor in their use of philosophical terminology is their theology infallible, but it does grasp and make available for us the essentially Christian facts and truths. If we have at all grasped the lessons of our enquiry we shall have gained a positive

appreciation of the earlier statements of Christianity and realise their organic continuity with our existing estimate of Christ and with a Christian doctrine of God in modern light.

The enquiry which I have now brought to a close contains the elements of a positive statement of philosophical theology in modern terms. As such it has suggestive value, and will serve its purpose if it encourages further study and directs the course of that study. Study of religions is an inexhaustible task, and the use of a kind of Mount Nebo whereupon to view the land is really considerable. If this little book should provide such a standpoint its existence will be justified.

"People say that Christianity has been tried and found wanting; the truth is that Christianity has not been tried because it is so difficult." The words are those of Mr. G. K. Chesterton. "It is so difficult"; therein it is in keeping with actual life and with the conditions of the spiritual ascent of man. It would be strange also if its constructive thought were a thing easily attained, and the condemnation of most easy and simple presentations of Christian theory is that there is not enough in them—not enough to be both whole and comprehensive.

The element of conflict in life, the hardness of the way—these things have in the greater contemporary writers, such as Eucken, Troeltsch, Bosanquet, and Sorley, gained philosophical appreciation. Such an appreciation has placed the crux of Theism where we have placed it, and it places in the forefront of our practical life and of our thought, which does not explain life away, the doctrines of renunciation and of

the new life which comes by the abandonment of the lower self. Not by neglecting such features in experience do we commend either philosophy or theology, but by showing that both in life and for thought is there an 'overcoming' and a resurrection. 'There is a river the streams whereof do make glad the City of God,' and its waters flow over and they renew the face of the world. Not the Divine Immanence, but the Divine Incarnation, gives us our bearings in theology. It provides the point at which the several degrees in immanence gain their climax. God, greater than the world and acting upon the world in creation and in redemption, is a necessary concept for a true estimate of the meaning of religion. If we come to think of it, the overcoming of the world is an essential ingredient in the victory, and a 'peace that passeth understanding' can never be anything easily won and merely 'given.' The Christian ethic is unmarred by naturalism, and equally is it unmarred by pessimism. It gives us enough for faith and hope and love because it looks facts in the face and speaks of healing and of 'some better thing.' Christianity rests upon redemption, for, if it did not, it would not be 'the religion of humanity,' but just one more futility among so many. It does not say that there is nothing wrong: it says, 'I will come and heal him'—such a work is, from our finite standpoint, a supernatural deed, but *it is something which is natural for God to do*. It expresses the whole spirit and meaning and the orderliness of a universe which is itself built on redemptive lines. "Sir, I oppose not rational and spiritual, for spiritual is most rational."[1]

[1] Whichcote, in reply to Tuckney.

It is possible to gain an adequate restatement of Christian thought if two things are possible: (1) If it is possible to show that there are distinctive features in Christianity, creative and organic. (2) If it is possible to set the distinctive element of Christianity in the context of valid philosophical conceptions. The problem has been so regarded in this book, and the answer has been given that these things can be done. The outcome is the establishment of Christian thought as the crown of theistic Idealism in virtue of its own data and specific genius. That which is most decisive for the moral and spiritual life is that which is most certainly known: it answers our ultimate questions and satisfies the demand of a philosophy which has a sense of proportion and consistently explains the lower in the light of the higher concepts. It is evident that, for the moral and spiritual life, Christ holds that place which He has held in all the Christian ages—our investigation of the conditions of true spiritual attainment have shown that. It is an evident consequence that, for a restated Christian thought, He holds all that decisive place which He holds in the historic Creeds and in the great systems of theology.

It would, however, be a misreading of my argument if it were thought that Christianity, as 'the power of God unto salvation,' and a practical appreciation of the great Christian institutions, turns upon anything like an appreciation of these theological issues. I hope I have made it clear that the actual grounds of Christian certainty reside in that personal penetration of the soul by Christ in His redemptive action which is His own self-witness and gives to the soul 'witness in itself.' That is only to say that it is for ever

true that only 'the pure in heart shall see God' and for ever possible to know Jesus Christ 'not after the flesh.' But, even so, we do not escape from theology.

"That philosophy has fulfilled none of its promises is untrue. Philosophical doctrines are not in the same state to-day as formerly. The constantly renewed discussion of the Great Problems has had the result, if no other, of presenting them in forms more precise and exact as they pass from hand to hand. . . . Certain errors are no longer possible, and certain milestones mark with accuracy the way of truth."[1] One large part of the work undertaken in this little book has been to confirm this very important preliminary insight. Varisco is also very emphatic about the test of a really competent philosophical system of ideas: it must solve the 'Great Problems'—problems regarding the permanence of values and regarding the finite personality which bears the values.

If, as Ward affirms, "Precise orientation of the various aspects of the world is one of the first duties of philosophy, and the ascertainment of the supreme and ultimate standpoint is perhaps its chief concern,"[2] we have been on the right road when we have sought to discover the material which is most significant for the moral and religious life.

The Christian religion provides a point where the demands of reason and the witness of experience are made one. Reason and Revelation meet in the conception of the highest good. That which is decisive for our moral and spiritual life is that which is most certainly known, and importance and reality are but

[1] Varisco, *The Great Problems*, E.T., p. 5.

[2] James Ward, *The Realm of Ends*, 2nd Edition, p. 2.

the two sides of one and the same shield. While that which meets our ultimate need is ' writ large ' in the Gospel-history so that he who runs may read, what is so written is full ' both of the wisdom and knowledge of God.'

The following are the positive results of our enquiry which appear to be justified if the method followed, a genuinely scientific method, is allowed.

I. There is to-day, on account of certain scientific attitudes of mind, dictated by observation and experiment, a definite approach to a philosophy which transcends materialism.

II. There is, further, dictated by the urge towards totality of view, combined with comprehensiveness, a main current of thought which sets towards ethical monotheism.

III. Consideration of the distinctively Christian data and constructs is not only justified but definitely called for on the principles of contemporary scientific enquiry —especially is this the case in view of the ultimate problems for thought and the enhanced stress upon the significance of history.

IV. The ultimate problem of religion, i.e. the problem of genuine self-realisation, involves ' an ethic of deed,' and an active solution through divine action. It implies a universal problem of which manifestly Christianity holds the solution in virtue of its distinctive genius gained from its historical and active base.

This is the establishment of the religious absolute value of Christianity. The absolute value of the Thought which expresses the significance of this absolute religious solution is further implied.

V. The Christian view of God and the world is the

climax of ethical monotheism, the ultimate view which best stands the tests of unity, totality, and comprehensiveness.

Alternatives to ethical monotheism appear, in the light of a wide survey of contemporary knowledge and constructive thought, to have their part or lot in a conflict of extremes, which cancel out, and are merely examples of premature synthesis. Alternatives to Christian thought appear, in the same light, as attempts to explain 'by reduction.' It is by the test of comprehensiveness that we establish the philosophy of the Christian religion.

There is one misconception of the significance of an enquiry of this nature which should not be made, at least, regarding what I have sought to accomplish in these pages. I do not trail Christian thought at the heels of any philosophical or scientific system, dominant or otherwise. I simply show that the ultimate problems for thought rise in our own day and generation as they have ever done, and that a consideration of them as they do, once again, actually arise is equivalent to a logical consideration of the final questions regarding Truth and Reality. It is difficult to see how Christian apologetic and Christian philosophy can even wish to avoid these issues in these relations. It is certainly an abandonment of the central and historic position of the great Christian thinkers, from the writer to the Hebrews to St. Thomas Aquinas and onwards, if we do not present Christian Philosophy as the climax of human insight responding to the revelation of God, as the unified and comprehensive answer to enquiry which comes 'not to destroy but to fulfil.'

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